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MAGDALEN.

BY THE

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THE
MAGDALEN.

Price One Shilling.



*I was weeping over my Child, who, frighted at
my Agonies, was more clamorous in his Grief, hung
round my Neck, & screamed he knew not why.*

THE
MAGDALEN,
OR,
HISTORY OF THE
FIRST PENITENT PROSTITUTE
RECEIVED INTO
That Charitable Asylum.
WITH
ANECDOTES OF OTHER PENITENTS.

BY THE
Rev. William Dodd, LL. D.

Were you, ye fair, but cautious whom ye trust,
Did you but think how seldom fools are just,
So many of your Sex would not in vain
Of broken vows and faithless men complain.
Of all the various wretches love has made,
How few have been by men of sense betray'd !
Convinc'd by reason, they your power confess ;
Pleas'd to be happy, as you're pleas'd to bless ;
And conscious of your worth, can never love you less.

Rowe.

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1799.

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THE PREFACE.

THE Editor of the following Letters, written at the earnest request of a truly benevolent Lady, by the first Penitent who was received into the Magdalen Hospital, now make their appearance in print.

They have many years been read with pleasure and entertainment by the circle of that lady's acquaintance, and by many of them thought worthy of the public eye. It is presumed their authenticity will not invalidate them in the opinion of that public, to whom they are now candidly submitted; and it may at least be presumed, they will afford equal entertainment with the generality of the books of amusement which have lately been published; at least they will be found, on perusal, to inculcate that necessary caution which the younger part of the fair sex confessedly stand so much in need of.

The reality of a tale of woe, and of the greatest distress, it must be owned, affects us much more sensibly than that which we know to be fictitious: or, in the words of an elegant periodical writer,

"Our passions are, therefore, more strongly
"moved, in proportion as we can more readily

“adopt the pains or pleasure proposed to our
“minds, by recognising them at once as our own,
“or considering them as naturally incident to
“our own state of life.

“Those parallel circumstances, and kindred
“images, to which we readily conform our
“minds, are, above all other writings, to be
“found in narratives of the lives of parti-
“cular persons; and therefore no species of
“writing seems more worthy of cultivation,
“since none can be more delightful or more
“useful; none can more certainly enchain the
“heart by irresistible interest, or more widely
“diffuse instruction to every diversity of con-
“dition.

“I have often,” says he, “thought that
“there has rarely passed a life, of which a judi-
“cious and a faithful narrative would not be useful;
“for not only every person has, in the mighty
“mass of the world, seen great numbers in,
“or possibly may be in, the same condition with
“themselves, and to whom the mistakes and
“miscarriages, escapes and expedients, would
“be of immediate caution, or apparent use; but
“there is such an uniformity in the state of man,
“if it be considered apart from adventitious
“and separable decorations and disguises, that
“there

“there is scarce any possibility of good or ill
“but is common to humankind. A great part
“of the time of those who are placed at the
“greatest distance by fortune, or by temper,
“must unavoidably pass in the same manner;
“and though, when the claims of nature are satisfied, caprice, vanity, and accident, begin to
“produce discriminations and peculiarities, yet
“the eye is not very heedful, or quick, which
“cannot discover the same causes still terminating their influence in the same effects; though
“sometimes accelerated, sometimes retarded, or
“perplexed, by multiplied combinations. We
“are all prompted by the same motives, all deceived by the same fallacies, all animated by
“hope, obstructed by danger, entangled by desire, and seduced by pleasure.”

The authentic narrative or history which is here submitted to the public, is the history of one of those unhappy women who would have continued virtuous and innocent, blameless and easy, but for the arts and insinuations of one whose rank and fortune furnished him with the means to corrupt and delude her. Let the libertine reflect a moment on the situation of that woman, who, being forsaken by her betrayer, is reduced to the necessity of turning prostitute for bread; and
judge

judge of the enormity of his guilt, by the evils which it produces.

It cannot be doubted that numbers have, and do, follow this dreadful course of life, in the same manner she herself experienced, with shame, horror, and regret; but where can they hope for refuge? "The world is not their friend, nor the world's law." Their sighs, and tears, and groans, are criminal in the eye of their tyrants, the bully and the bawd; who fatten on their misery, and threaten them with want or a gaol, if they shew the least design of escaping from their bondage.

She was the first who, by an immediate application, on the opening the humane, the laudable, the benevolent institution of the Magdalen Hospital, convinced the world, that there needed only a place of refuge for such a number of unhappy and miserable creatures, to impel them to an early application, before a long course of libertinism had taken such intire hold of their minds, as to render every virtuous effort abortive. What pity it is, that so useful an institution is not made more general, by larger donations, and more universally subscribed to! But the novelty of the undertaking being at an end, it continues to dispense its salutary effects under

under its original limitations; but under those limitations it has been, and continues to be, the means, under the blessing of the Almighty, of relieving great numbers of unhappy females from wretchedness, want and misery, and of placing them once more in the world as useful members of society.

This would eventually have been seen in the history of the Magdalen before us, who, though the first received into its charitable foundation, is not the only instance that can be produced, of having afterwards rose to an elevated rank in life; the particulars of which it is not permitted us to relate.

Let the youthful mind of both sexes have ever in contemplation, “That we rise in the
“ morning of youth, full of vigour and full of
“ expectation; we set forward with spirit and
“ hope, with gaiety and with diligence; and
“ travel on a while in the straight road of piety
“ towards the mansion of rest. In a short time
“ we remit our fervor, and endeavour to find
“ some mitigation of our duty, and some more
“ easy means of obtaining the same end.

“ We then relax our vigour, and resolve no
“ longer to be terrified with crimes at a distance,
“ but rely upon our own constancy, and venture

“ to

“ to approach what we resolve never to touch.
“ We thus enter the bowers of ease, and repose
“ in the shades of security. Here the heart
“ softens, and vigilance subsides. We are then
“ willing to enquire whether another advance
“ cannot be made, and whether we may not, at
“ least, turn our eyes upon the gardens of pleasure.
“ We approach them with scruple and
“ hesitation: we enter them, but enter timorous
“ and trembling, and always hope to pass
“ through them without losing the road of virtue,
“ which we, for a while, keep in our sight,
“ and to which we purpose to return. But
“ temptation succeeds temptation, and one compliance
“ prepares us for another. We in time
“ lose the happiness of innocence, and solace
“ our disquiet in sensual gratifications. By degrees
“ we let fall the remembrance of our original
“ intention, and quit the only adequate
“ object of rational desire. We entangle ourselves
“ in vice, immerse ourselves in luxury,
“ and rove through the labyrinths of inconstancy
“ till the darkness of old age begins to invade
“ us, and disease and anxiety obstruct our way.
“ We then look back upon our lives with horror,
“ with sorrow, with repentance; and wish,
“ but too often vainly wish, that we had not
“ forsaken

“ forsaken the ways of virtue. Happy are they
“ who shall learn from such examples not to
“ despair, but shall remember, like the penitent,
“ the particulars of whose early life is here de-
“ picted, that though the day is past, and
“ strength is wasted, there yet remains one effort
“ to be made; that reformation is never hope-
“ less, nor sincere endeavours ever unassisted;
“ that the wanderer may at length return after
“ every error; and that they who implore
“ strength and courage from above, shall find
“ danger and difficulty give way before them.
“ Go then, my child, commit thyself to the care
“ of Omnipotence; and when the morning calls
“ again to toil, begin anew thy journey and
“ thy life.”

The lady who is the subject of the following sheets (for kind Providence has now raised her to an elevated rank in life) availed herself of this admirable lesson; and though it will, from her own relation, appear, that she passed some years a drudge of extortion, and the sport of drunkenness, sometimes the property of one man, and sometimes the common prey of accidental lewdness; at one time tricked up for sale by the mistress of a brothel, at another begging in the streets, to relieve from hunger and wretchedness

wretchedness herself and a beloved infant, without any reflections at night, but such as guilt and terror impress upon such wretched and unhappy creatures; yet if those who pass their days in plenty and security, could visit for an hour the dismal receptacles to which the prostitute retires from her nocturnal excursions, and see the wretches that lie crowded together, mad with intemperance, ghastly with famine, nauseous with filth, and noisome with disease, it would not be easy for any degree of abhorrence to harden them against compassion, or to repress the desire which they must immediately feel, and, like the patron of this once wretched female, attempt to rescue such of their fellow human creatures from a state so miserably dreadful. To restore them to peace and virtue, and render them not only happy in themselves, but make them, as members, again useful to society.



THE
MAGDALEN.

IN A

Series of Letters to a Lady.

LETTER I.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

Madam,

THE favour of a request from you will ever operate in the nature of a command to one who has been so highly honoured with confidence, with sympathy, and with the most salutary advice, in the future conduct of a life rescued from distress and infamy, by the favour of your kind recommendation to this happy place, and the further favour of your generous countenance since I was placed here. I therefore cheerfully comply with your request, in relating the circumstances of a life, which you were pleased to consider as a warning to the younger part of my sex.

My father was a clergyman in the west of England. He served two curacies and one living, all which together did not bring him in one hundred pounds per annum; but entirely engrossed his time, as he endeavoured to do his duty in each parish to the utmost of his power, which obliged him to be at the expence of keeping a horse. This, with the continual repairs necessary to his parsonage house, which was much decayed, and the ill state of health wherewith my mother was afflicted for many years, made his income but barely

B

sufficient

sufficient for himself and his family, though it was not large; for of many children my mother bore him, one elder sister and myself only lived to grow up.

When I was about fourteen years old, my mother died, which occasioned my sister's return home. She had spent three years with an aunt, who was a milliner in a large town in the county of Devonshire; but, by the loss of my mother, became necessary to take care of my father's house, whose health declined so fast, that nursing him was her chief employ.

In a little more than a year we lost my father; a great misfortune to us both; but particularly to me, who was thus left to my own guidance and support when I was but fifteen years of age. My appearance, indeed, was womanly. I had been bred up in religious principles, but at that age they were not deeply grounded, nor so fixed as to stand against the temptations of the world, into which I was now thrown.

My father's effects, when sold, and all accounts settled, yielded us but a few pounds. My aunt was dead; and we had no relation who could assist us; but a lady in the neighbourhood, who had always professed a great regard for my father, called upon us, when the first agonies of our grief were over, so far as to be able to perceive the forlornness of our situation.

My sister applied to this lady for her protection for me, for whom she was most uneasy, being, as she said, able to provide for her own support; but my youth and person, which, perhaps, she beheld with too partial eyes, filled her with apprehensions on my account.

The lady assured us she would do the utmost to serve me; that if she had no sons, or if I was less handsome, she would receive me into her own house; but that was now impossible; however, she would enquire among her friends if she could find any thing proper for me, and hoped to succeed before we were obliged to quit the house.

This lady was as good as her word; and not being so much afraid for other people's sons as she was for her own, she prevailed with a lady of her acquaintance,
who

who lived in the next county, to receive me as her woman. She had suffered me to assist in the dressing of her daughters several times, that I might be qualified for my place; and, at the time appointed, gave me a letter of recommendation, to secure still a better reception.

To take leave of my sister, was like losing my only parent; for such she was to me, though not above five years older than myself. I think I could not have felt much deeper affliction for her death, our separation appearing to us not much less grievous. I was frightened at the thought of going among entire strangers, and into a new employ; and my sister's apprehensions were such as were but too well verified in the sequel. She spent the last day we were together, in warning me against the temptations which would, perhaps, fall in my way, of which I remember the following words were part, for they made a strong impression, though to little purpose; and the misfortunes into which I fell from disregarding them, fixed them stronger in my mind.

"My dear Emily," said she, "I cannot fear for your honesty nor sincerity, though I have said so much on those subjects: your nature is superior to any offences of this kind; but my apprehensions are numerous in another respect. I will not attempt to tell you you are not handsome; your own eyes, in such particulars, gives you sufficient evidence, and we seldom doubt the truth: besides, the less persuaded you are of this, the more you will be ready to hear it. Such a person as yours, in your situation, will attract many admirers; for while the one charms, the other will excite hopes which I would flatter myself will be disappointed; but I confess my apprehensions arise as much from the tenderness of your heart, as from the snares that will be laid in your way: if that does not betray you, all the rest may be easily baffled: But what can I say that will steel your heart with indifference? Alas! it is above my power; He only who made it can correct it. To Him, my dear Emily, you must apply, and bear constantly

“ constantly in mind, that your present and eternal
“ happiness on the proper regulation of your affections
“ will ultimately depend.”

Advice to this purpose she repeated the whole day,
with many tears and anxious prayers for my preservation.

The next morning parted us, never to meet again
with the same satisfactory melancholy as that last interview appeared to us.

You perceive, my dear Madam, that I have, in this first letter, confined myself to my departure from my sister, and the lady who had professed so much friendship for myself and family, as to take care of placing me in a comfortable state, and of providing for my future support by a reputable servitude.

I now beg leave, my dearest Madam, to conclude my first letter, and to assure you, that I shall continue my narrative at every vacant opportunity; for no pleasure to me is equal to that of convincing you, by a ready compliance with every request of yours, that I am,

Madam,

Your grateful humble Servant,

M. S.



LETTER II.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

MY first letter, my dear Madam, concluded with my departure from my deceased father's friend, with a recommendation from her to Lady Markland, to whom she had engaged me.

One day's journey brought me to that lady's house, as my new mistress. I was immediately introduced into the parlour, where she then was sitting, with Sir George, her husband, Mr. Markland, their son, a young gentleman of twenty-five years of age, and another lady and gentleman, who were then with them on a visit. My confusion was so great, I was scarcely able to answer the questions she put to me, or even to deliver the letter with which I was charged. While her ladyship was perusing the epistle, my distress increased; for the rest of the company fixed their eyes so entirely upon me, that I could find no place for my own, and began to think the questions which had before distressed me, were a great relief, in having attracted my attention. I have reason to believe the lady took compassion on me; for she called me to her, asked me how I had performed my journey, and such sort of questions, in which she seemed to have no other intention but to encourage me: then turning to Lady Markland, said, "I see your Ladyship is not of a jealous disposition."

"No, indeed," replied my lady, "I am not; but if I was, it would be no reason why I should be plagued with an ugly face about me; for Sir George must see handsome ones abroad, if I suffered none but Hottentots to be about my person."

This short dialogue increased my confusion; and no words ever sounded more acceptable, than the orders Lady Markland gave to the servant who introduced me, to shew me to her housekeeper.

This housekeeper was one who had lived a great many years in the family, and, as I afterwards found, was held in great estimation. She understood all the necessary parts of a housekeeper's office, and none better than flattery; which perhaps gave a great charm to her other qualifications; for she was not without her defects; though she was an useful director in the kitchen, and an assiduous watch over the other servants; yet her first attachment was to her own interest, of which she was never neglectful. She was no bigot to truth; and, in her lady's absence, made herself amends for the flattery she thought proper to bestow on her before her face, falling as much short of what she deserved at one time, as she went beyond it another. Nor did she excel more in chastity than in other virtues; for she had for some years been suspected of an intrigue with Sir George's valet de-chambre; but being both thought excellent servants, it was winked at; though all the family were certain that it was well known to their master and lady. Indeed, being often present when they conversed freely, I found they made a jest of it; not from disbelief, but from thinking it of little or no consequence.

This greatly shocked me at first; and the familiarities between these two lovers, who were my only companions at meals, and on evenings, were very distressing. However, as they gave me reason to think my absence would not be disagreeable, I sat with them as little as I could.

My lady was very good natured to all her servants, and to me among the rest; though I had no hopes of becoming a favourite, when I saw, by her housekeeper's practice, how much she loved flattery. She would often say, when I omitted an opportunity of imitating her, that I was dull; and sometimes that she fancied I could think nothing commendable in any one but myself, but all this without any bitterness.

I seldom saw Sir George, but in his lady's presence. He would often talk to me, and compliment me, calling me Lady Markland's Venus; and when I entered the room, would cry, here comes your Goddess, my dear; but

but all with so much mirth, and so little design, that in time I learnt not to mind it, and answered to the name of Venus as readily as to that of Emily.

Mr. Markland was much less free, but more attentive. He treated me with much respect; so that his mother would sometimes tell him she believed he thought I was a goddess in reality. He would answer, that a fine woman was much better; that no situation in life should make a man fail in politeness to one of the other sex; and that really there was a modesty in my appearance that was truly respectable. These sort of compliments he would make me before his parents, and often gave the conversation such a turn, as afforded him opportunities of applying others to me, by his eyes, which were unobserved by every one else. He found excuses to come into the housekeeper's room, where he would rally her and her lover on their mutual passion, taking occasion, from it, to vent some libertine sentiments, wherein they were sure to second him; and sometimes to behave with a tenderness and gallantry to me, which I ought with shame to say rather alarmed than offended me; so little was I the better for my sister's good advice.

I was much surprised at a manner of life which I thought could be found only among the reprobate, whereas Sir George and my lady appeared universally respected. She behaved with good humour to her servants, and he with humanity to his tenants; that is, he did not require more of them than they could possibly pay; and chose rather to turn them out of their farms, than support them in gaol. In short, they committed no vices, and had constitutional good nature. Their characters might be well drawn by negatives; but as for positive virtues, they thought them unnecessary: they would declare they never did any harm, and did all the good they could: a strong assertion, and difficult to be made good by the best people; for as every action is an example to somebody, and has numerous consequences, many that the actor esteems innocent, will prove pernicious. Thus Sir George and my lady, by
winking

winking at the intrigues of their servants, and speaking lightly of religion and virtue, banished both from their family, and became not only answerable for their own faults, but for those which their examples encouraged in their domestics.

My sister was as much vexed with the account I sent her of the family, as I was surprised at what I related. She wrote me word, she wished me in a worse place, if I had but a better example. She had been taken into a milliner's shop in the town where her aunt had lived, and where her good conduct had recommended her.

I had not been a month at Sir George's, before Mr. Markland began to make real love to me. He took every opportunity of finding me alone, which my practice of avoiding the housekeeper's room rendered more easy. I was sensible of a new-born partiality for this gentleman; and not having forgot what my sister had said to me, resolved to endure more of the housekeeper's company, that I might be less alone. This did not make much alteration; for Mr. Markland was too quick sighted, not to know that interest had its due weight with the housekeeper. He began therefore to make her presents, which his behaviour to me explained the reason of; and she, willing to deserve his bounty, multiplied opportunities for his coming into her room; and was continually, in his absence, telling me of his passion for me, and of my good fortune, and how much it might turn out to my advantage, without my understanding in what manner she meant. I could comprehend no other method of being benefitted by his love than marriage, every thing else to me appeared attended with guilt and ruin.

I was now much at a loss how to avoid Mr. Markland; and, what was worse, my heart was ready to furnish me with excuses for not doing it. My religious principles grew weaker every day; piety was treated as enthusiasm, strictness of manners as folly; for "our Maker was merciful, and designed to make us "happy, which we could only be by following our "pleasures; that our tastes and passions were given us
"for

"for benefits, that we might receive happiness from gratifying them."

My lady having found me several times reading in a religious book, at last snatched it out of my hand, and throwing it down, said, "the girl will turn her head." "I never knew a puritanical servant, who did not turn out a whore or a thief. I want not to have my jewels stolen to feed methodist parsons, or my cloaths pawned to furnish out their weekly contributions." As I had never seen her so angry before, I began to think there must be some crime in religion which I did not know of to make it appear so offensive.

The housekeeper one day caught me at prayers. This was told in the room as a most ridiculous circumstance; and much laughter ensued. She asked me if I was praying for a husband. Mr. Markland called me his fair faint; told me I mistook the matter; for I was made not to pray, but to be prayed to.

To find religion the object both of serious censure, and of ridicule, made me think there was something very uncommon in it, and that, in having it, I was certainly guilty of a great peculiarity. My religion was rather founded on habit than reason. I had been told *what* I should do; but my father's continual occupation abroad had prevented his teaching me *why* I should do so. Thus I was unprovided with reasons for my practice: and Mr. Markland, whose understanding furnished him, almost at one view, with all that could be said on every subject, was diligent in removing what he called the prejudices of education.

Every frailty that had been committed by any person who professed some regard for religion, if it had come to their knowledge, was repeated by them with triumph. But I was not weak enough to think this availed them much; for I had never been taught to believe that any common degree of piety would always conquer natural disposition, or be a certain defence against the temptations of the world; nor that the most religious were infallible! While they were mortal they must be frail; and none pays so great a compliment to religion,

as those who imagine every one who professes it must, or should be, a saint; but often wide is the profession from the practice.

In this manner we went on for near half a year that we continued in the country. Mr. Markland grew more assiduous, and more open in his courtship, and I listened to it every day with more pleasure and fewer fears.

Nor did my companions suffer his cause to lose in his absence; they continually contrived to leave us alone together, when he would lavish all the vows and oaths that ever lover broke with such tender opportunity, that I sometimes wondered how, with a heart so filled with frailty, I had resisted; but principle still got the better of my passion, though it was risen to the utmost excess of tenderness. But this principle, notwithstanding it was so carefully planted by the best of fathers, and so frequently brought to my remembrance by the kindest of sisters, was not in the end sufficient to guard me from the too fatal effects of such free conversation, countenanced by people in so superior a line of life, with the additional temptation of the constant solicitations of Mr. Markland. Were people of condition to observe equal caution that is in every department observed in your house, my good lady, respecting their servants, I am persuaded there would not prove so many unhappy instances of female frailty. I have the honour to be,

My dear Madam,

Your obliged humble Servant,

M. S.



LETTER III.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

IT was, my dear Madam, very unfortunate for me, that, in the predicament my last letter described my situation at Lady Markland's, I had no friend, no sister to advise with. Young and foolish as I was, not to attend to the evil consequences of admitting the freedom of Mr. Markland's addresses, whose situation in life, so much elevated above my humble sphere, might have given a person of less consideration than myself a necessary caution. But Mr. Markland was too well acquainted with the human passions, and I too little with the arts of concealment, for him to remain ignorant of the state of my heart; and had he not perceived it, his faithful assistants would have informed him of it; for they would, in their discourse, wind me in such a manner, that sometimes my blushes, and sometimes my fears, explained it more fully than words could have done. On the knowledge of my weakness Mr. Markland built his hopes of success. He often wondered at my resistance, but for ever expected it to fail. I sometimes had nothing but tears to answer to his tenderest professions. I wept for shame at listening to them, and for grief at thinking it necessary to reject them.

When we were in London, Mr. Markland had still more opportunities of seeing me. Sir George and my lady were always abroad, or engaged with company. They seldom inquired after their son, thinking it the duty of polite parents to suffer him to take his own way; or if they happened to ask any questions, the servants knew what to answer. Thus almost all his time was spent with me. While I was busy in attending my lady at her toilette, he made his necessary visits, that the rest of the day might be his own.

I confess I was not always desirous of avoiding him; but if I had, I could not easily have contrived it; for every

every servant was bought to his interest. I desired the house-maid, who had leisure in the afternoons, to come and work with me, thinking thereby either to prevent his coming, or at least to put some restraint on his addresses; but he no sooner entered than she retired; and I found, upon questioning her, that every servant had felt his bounty, either to procure their secrecy, or their assistance.

Sensible of my own weakness, and how far every one was combined for my destruction, I had still virtue enough left to wish that I could find some refuge against myself; but could see none, unless I could attain it of my lady. Filled with this thought, I determined to apply to her for advice and assistance, acknowledging my own excess of passion, and giving her as little reason as possible to be angry with her son.

I waited with impatience for a summons to attend my lady at her toilette, and took no small pains to keep up my resolution, which, perhaps, I had never been able to form, had not Mr. Markland been obliged that morning to go abroad with his father.

The time at length came; but, to my great disappointment, I was followed in by a country neighbour of her ladyship's, who immediately desired to speak with her alone.

I was accordingly dismissed, and not recalled till the arrival of more company, upon whose appearance the first lady took her leave. My purpose was equally disappointed, four visitors had taken the place of one.

One of the ladies observed, that she who was gone away looked very melancholy. "Had you been mistress to the king, or his prime minister," added she, "I should have thought you had just refused a petition."

"The most ridiculous woman," said my lady, "surely that ever was born. What do you think is the subject of her affliction?" Here her ladyship laughed so violently, that she could not immediately answer their inquiries, though they all expressed great curiosity to know what it was.

"Would you believe," continued Lady Markland, "that all the excess of grief you see painted on the poor woman's countenance, proceeds from having discovered that her son, a young man of about three and twenty, keeps a mistress? and she came to communicate her sorrows to me, hoping that from my friendship she should receive some compassion." Here they all joined in such peals of laughter, as Comus's crew can scarcely equal.

"And pray," asked one of the ladies, "what consolation did your ladyship give her?" "Consolation!" replied my lady. "I asked the woman if she expected her son to be a Joseph. That no man of spirit was without intrigues. It was a male privilege."

Is this the person, said I to myself, to whom I meant to apply for refuge against her son's gallantry, and my own passion?

"A male privilege, indeed," answered one of the ladies. "We may see the men not only made laws, but customs. They have carved themselves out pretty lives. They the primrose path of dalliance tread, while they would confine us to the thorny way."

"Do not be so severe upon them," said another. "You forget that if none of our sex were in the path, it would not appear so flowry. They cannot exclude us."

"That," interrupted my lady, "is an advantage to women of an inferior rank; but people of fashion cannot well make use of it. If Spencer's Sir Calidore had been a real character, and the blorant beast, Slander, in fact killed, the case might have been different."

"If it is not killed," interrupted another lady, "it has barked so long that nobody regards it; for really women now are under almost as few restraints as the men. But pray what is the woman this very unfortunate lady's son has pitched upon? Perhaps somebody very expensive, and that may have its inconveniences."

"No," replied Lady Markland; "the young man has been humble enough; he has contented himself with one of mamma's maids." Here again the ladies were highly entertained; but one of them observed, that "she thought the lowness of his taste might be mortifying to an affectionate parent: there was a want of spirit and proper pride in it."

In this manner the conversation continued till the arrival of two gentlemen. My office being ended, I withdrew.

I heard with surprise so many women of character, who were so much my superiors in age and experience, and consequently I thought in wisdom, treat that as a privilege which I had looked upon as the greatest misfortune that could befall me, and against which I wanted a defence that I might better rely upon than my own resolution. What Mr. Markland had said to me upon that subject, had less power over my judgment, than my affection gave him over my heart. His arguments came from a suspected quarter; his interest was visible, and therefore they had less weight; but when ladies, who had no such inducements, confirmed his doctrine, how could I avoid suspecting myself of those ill-grounded prejudices of which he had so often accused me? My heart took advantage of this opportunity, and, with the assistance of such strong authorities, silenced my reason and my principles.

Full of these thoughts, I returned to my chamber, where I found Mr. Markland waiting for me. He received me with a transport beyond what so short a separation could make me expect. The joy so visible in his countenance communicated itself to my heart; and I, who two hours before wanted to find a means of avoiding him for ever, was charmed at seeing him again. He told me, that, no longer able to live without me, he had left his father at a chocolate house, and returned home with the utmost impatience! Fatal impatience!

We had now been in London above four months. I had continued corresponding with my sister, though not daring to communicate the thoughts that were uppermost

most in my mind. My style grew so constrained, and my letters so short, that she took notice of it, and, more grieved than offended, expressed fears for my health, attributing to some defect in that the alteration in my manner; for it wore the appearance of melancholy; but, if shame for the weakness I felt in my heart made writing to her so difficult to me, it is not strange if, when guilt took its place, I was no longer able to write at all. I feared her advice, which was now the severest reproach to me; looked on myself as unworthy to address her, so much did I reverence a conduct which I had not been able to imitate. From this time my correspondence ceased, as it had slackened so much before. She did not immediately observe it; but when a letter of hers had remained above a month unanswered, I received another from her, filled with the kindest anxiety, and most alarming apprehensions.

They did not appear without foundation; for my health was now impaired; I grew pale and thin; my cheerfulness was changed into tears, and self reproaches; for the little colour I retained, I was obliged to my blushes, which every eye that gazed on me raised in my cheeks.

My lady and Sir George observed the change, and very obligingly inquired into the nature of my complaints. I could by no means answer them with sincerity, but invented such disorders as I thought they could not disapprove. In this situation I continued some time, and it was impossible to describe the anguish of my mind. You, my good Madam, whose sympathetic feelings are called forth on every occasion, will excuse me dwelling longer on a subject which now gives me pain in the recollection. I therefore beg leave to conclude myself, Madam,

Your faithful humble Servant,

M. S.

LETTER IV.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

THE state of my mind at the period I had brought my unfortunate life to, in the last letter I had the honour to address to you, Madam, was such as I could with difficulty describe, and such as only the compassionate can feel. A state of fluctuation betwixt good and evil, to a delicate and susceptible mind, is of all states that of a pitiable one. You, my dear Madam, will guess at my feelings, when the kind letter I had mentioned receiving from my sister having remained unanswered, was followed by another, which informed me she was coming to town; that the milliner with whom she now was, had a daughter then grown capable of managing the business, and therefore she had got from her a recommendation to one of the same trade in London; and as soon as the terms were settled, she should come there with great satisfaction, as it would bring her near me,

This news filled me with distress. How could I, who was not able to take courage to write to her, bear her sight, who would so circumstantially examine me about every particular of my situation and conduct, and whose eyes would no less exactly observe my person, which I had reason to believe would soon appear as visibly altered as my face?

I could not conceal my uneasiness from Mr. Markland, who was both the cause and consolation of all my sufferings. He told me, it only confirmed him in a purpose which he intended to propose to me, which was to place me in a house where I might live free from the continual apprehensions I now was in, and enjoy the ease and affluence I so well deserved: that it was but reasonable that she who possessed his whole heart, should at least share his fortune. To see me so settled would render him very happy, as he could then enjoy my conversation

versation without restraint or interruption; and he flattered himself, that he should see less melancholy mixed with my love and tenderness, which was now an abatement to my felicity. He added, that he had considered of the impossibility of my attending his mother into the country, since a few months must affect my shape so as to render it apparent to her, and therefore he had intended to desire me to find some excuse for giving her notice that I should leave her before the true cause should be perceived; and he was glad that while he was gratifying himself in withdrawing from a state of servitude the woman who in all eyes, but those of the priest's, must be looked upon as his wife, (for as such he should ever esteem me in the tenderest sense,) he should remove me from a sister whose prejudices might be the occasion of much trouble to me.

This proposal was, indeed, a great relief to my spirits. I longed to be removed from the eyes I feared; but could find no good excuse for leaving my lady. However, as the best I could invent, I took the first opportunity of informing her, that a relation in the country, whom I durst not disoblige, insisted upon my coming to live with her.

Lady Markland suspected the truth of what I said, and told me she wished it was not another kind of invitation that carried me away. "But, girl," added she, "depend upon this, all your beauty will not keep one lover, though it may gain you a thousand. After a short possession, a woman not half so handsome will appear preferable, and you will be left on the common."

Though I had no reason to suppose her ladyship inspired with any spirit but that of experience, I could not help being shocked at so dreadful a prophecy.

Scarcely capable of answering her, and utterly unable to insist on the lie I had made, I, with much difficulty, and with tears starting from my eyes, said I hoped my behaviour had not given her ladyship grounds for such suspicion.

No, no," replied my lady; "I have no fault to find with your conduct; you seem mighty sober, and modest; but I never in my life knew a very demure girl come to any good."

I was glad to come off with so general a reflection; for I was not without my apprehensions, from what she had said, that she suspected part of the truth. As for the fears she had excited, as soon as I had told them to Mr. Markland, he dispelled them all, by the kindest assurances of constancy and unalterable love; professions which, contrary to all experience, will, I fancy, be believed while love and folly exists.

Lady Markland having soon got another servant recommended to her, I obtained liberty to depart before my sister came to town, and was guarded by Mr. Markland's servant to my new house, which was very pretty, and furnished in the neatest manner imaginable, though not expensive. Mr. Markland was there to receive me, and was delighted with seeing me so well pleased, and with perceiving it was so much beyond my expectation; for vanity had not yet found its way into my heart, love too entirely filled it all.

I was desirous of putting my lover to as little expence as possible, therefore took but one servant, and endeavoured, by the regularity of my management, to persuade the neighbourhood that I was his wife, but obliged to conceal that circumstance during Sir George's life. This opinion Mr. Markland gave all the colour to that he conveniently could, and, indeed, might safely do so: for whatever comfort my inexperience might draw from it, thinking I thereby avoided slander, he must well know that such indulgencies to women in my situation are so common, that they find credit with none but the very lowest people: and that, instead of making a mistress pass for a wife, they often occasion one who is really a wife to pass for a mistress.

Sir George and Lady Markland did not stay long in town after I left them: their son excused himself from going into the country with them, and by various pretences prolonged his stay.

He

He was now always with me, and always equally a lover. His tenderness continued unabated; though my frequent indispositions cast a languor over my countenance, and deadened my complexion. Whenever I was tolerably well, he carried me to the places of public diversion most frequented during the summer season; they were entirely new to me. His conversation would have rendered any place pleasing. It is not strange then that I was delighted with places so calculated to entertain. He thought the satisfaction I shewed in them a sufficient reward for the trouble of attending me; for he had been so long accustomed to them, that they had in a great measure lost their charms to him.

Mr. Markland was extremely pleased to see me attract the notice of the company, and would with particular satisfaction make me observe the admiration that was paid, which was entirely overlooked by me, so wholly was my attention fixed on him. At first I was pleased with being admired, as I thought the approbation of others might recommend me the more to him; but at last I liked it for its own sake. Vanity, which had so long worked unseen in my heart, began to grow perceptible; and the pleasure of being admired made the greatest charm of a public place.

Mr. Markland was sometimes obliged to go down to his father for about a week; but short retirement urges sweet return. He always left me with regret, and returned with impatience. These little absences were great afflictions to me; for having been so long habituated to his company, I knew not how to live a day without him; a week was an age; and I became almost as insensible as a statue till again cheered by his presence. I every moment regretted the loss of him; and sometimes, I confess, lamented that I was deprived of admiration; for when he was away, I never went abroad, unless some family business carried me; so that I not only lost the pleasure of my heart, but the delight of my vanity.

Towards the end of autumn, during one of those short excursions I walked out to make some small purchases.

chases. In my way I went through a street which I had not been in before, and going by a milliner's shop, I stepped in for some little thing I wanted, when the first person who offered to serve me happened to be my sister. We were both so affected, that we became motionless for some time. My sister recovering herself the soonest, ran to me to embrace me, when, casting down her eyes, she perceived the alteration in my shape, and, instead of coming up to me, sunk down in a chair, where a flood of tears relieved her.

I stood in no less want of relief, but could find none. I was almost suffocated with the struggle in my breast, between the various passions that affected me. My sister seeing the condition I was in, cried out, "Oh! my poor Emily!" and leading me into a parlour behind the shop, called for some hartshorn; and when she had brought me to myself, "Oh, my child!" said she, "what can I say to you? how can I bear to see you in the condition you are in? and yet how dare I say what I would, when I fear that even the sight of me may have done your constitution irreparable mischief? I would not increase the shock I have given you; and yet can I with any degree of propriety see you again? The account I received at Lady Markland's door, when I went with the utmost tenderness, and anxious impatience, to enquire after you, is but too well confirmed. Oh, thou fallen angel! how can my fond heart support the sight of thee, thus involved both in present and future misery!"

I could answer only with my tears. I threw myself on my knees, and catching hold of hers, my streaming eyes begged for pardon: but my words could find no utterance, till at last I got power enough just to say, "Forgive me, my dearest sister! My parent! best of friends! forgive me!"

"My dearest sister," says she, "ask not forgiveness of me; ask it of *Him* whom you have most offended, and who not only can pardon the past, but preserve you from all future crimes."

My

My sister thus continued her exhortations for some time, till she asked me if I would quit the way of life wherein I was then engaged, and never see the man again who had led me into a state of ruin and destruction; promising, that if I consented to this, she would take all possible care of me, and provide me with every convenience: for though she was then going to be married to a young man, who was a very advantageous match for her, and whom she sincerely loved, yet, if he, disapproving of her conduct in this particular, should attempt to restrain it, she would for ever forego all her expectations, and should think herself greatly rewarded by saving me from eternal ruin.

What could I say, when I could not resolve to accept of so kind, so generous an offer? I begged her not to oppress me with her goodness, that I was not deserving of her care, and would never suffer her affections for me to prevent her happy establishment; wished heaven might shower down all its blessings on her; but that, as for myself, the die was cast; I was too far gone to retreat. She again pressed her offers. I told her I could not deprive the child I went with of a parent: nor was it possible to forsake a man whose whole happiness was centered in me, and who deserved every thing from me, having no aim but to promote my felicity.

When my sister found me unalterable in this respect, then said she, "My dear Emily, I will not urge what
"I might properly say, because I fear for your health.
"I will not now endeavour at what I see your passions
"would render ineffectual to any purpose but that of
"making you uneasy, when ease of mind would be most
"necessary for your recovery. I can only pray that
"your life may be spared till you are fitter for another
"world, and that He alone who can turn the heart, will
"take compassion on yours; but it is impossible for
"me to see you any more. It would only be increasing my wretchedness, and creating yours. The
"thought of the situation you are in will imbitter my
"molt

"most prosperous days, but it is my duty not to suffer it to disgrace them."

I cried out in an agony, which no words can express, "My dearest sister! do not hate me, do not despise me. Your hatred or contempt would break my heart." "No, my dearest Emily," replied my sister, "be assured I can never hate or despise you. I shall pity, grieve and pray for you; but, with all your faults, must love you; love you with a tenderness none but a parent can know; for such I have always felt for you; and whenever you will love yourself as truly as I love you, shall with joy receive you, forget the past, hope for the future, endeavour to relieve your griefs, and confirm your happiness."

With many tears and embraces we parted with each other. A chair was called, for I was not able to walk, my body felt the effects so strongly of the agitation of my mind; for, in my way home, every tender, every endearing advice she had formerly given me; the affectionate letters I had received from time to time from her; the neglect, not to say unkindness, with which I had treated her, during the latter part of my continuance with Lady Markland, crowded on my memory, and it was with difficulty I could support myself home. It is at this period of my life that I feel the force of your intimation, my good lady, that my unfortunate fall might prove a warning to many young and inexperienced females; and that it may prove so, is the sincere wish and prayer of, Madam,

Your very humble Servant,

M. S.

LETTER V.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

I REPEAT the observations I made in my last letter; I had the pleasure of writing to you, Madam, that I never was so sensible of the sacrifice I had made Mr. Markland, as when I returned home, and reflected how true, how amiable a friend I had given up for him. When I considered my sister's whole conduct, how little did I appear in my own eyes! I do not know how I could have supported the view of my own meanness, had not Mr. Markland arrived in town, and restored me to my vanity; as nothing but vanity could preserve me from my own contempt; for I think I may properly give it that name, to an opinion that succeeds what we deserve.

A young woman called at my door to enquire after my health for two or three days successively after this interview with my sister, whom I judged was sent by her in kind anxiety, lest the great flutter of my spirits should have impaired my constitution. After that I heard nothing of her, nor durst I make any enquiries at that time.

No change happened in my way of life till I was brought to bed of a very fine boy; nor did this make any alteration, but my temporary illness, and the addition of this lovely child to our family, which was an increase of happiness. Our fondness for it was equal; and, instead of our affections being lessened by having a third to share it with us, each seemed to look upon the other's being parent to this little darling as a new pledge, which caused, if possible, an increase of fondness.

The winter altered, not lessened, our attendance on public amusements; but we were obliged to go in a more private manner, as there was a great chance of meeting with some of Mr. Markland's graver acquaint-

ance. This caution, if I had not been lost to shame, must have shocked me; but the violence of my passion, the extreme tenderness of Mr. Markland's behaviour, and the care he took to furnish me with books, that I should in his absence keep alive my infatuation, made me regardless of every thing else; and no one was ever disposed to say more cordially from her heart,

Fame, wealth, and honour, what are ye to love?

A second year passed away in the same madness of the mind; but at the beginning of the third I thought I perceived an alteration in Mr. Markland. He endeavoured to appear the same; but the tenderness of his behaviour, instead of being the free emanation of his heart, seemed forced and constrained. The impediments to his coming to me were multiplied.

One would have thought that people were now making themselves reparation for having lost much of his company, and were determined to engross him intirely. Even his child grew less dear to him, though more engaging every day.

At first I endured this change with silence; and I believe nothing could have prevented its being constantly so, but the fear of rendering myself odious in the eyes of him to whom it was grievous to be looked upon even with indifference.

At last I gently hinted my apprehensions; but I found I gave offence for having seen too clearly; and, to avoid any thing which might make me lose the little of his company I now enjoyed, I determined hereafter to bear all in silence; but it is not in the power of language to describe the anguish of my heart, nor the difficulty I found in concealing it.

In this wretched state I continued for three months, a state which seldom changes for the better, unless when it arises from indifference in us, which to some women is almost as difficult to conquer as that of their lovers: and, to add to my misfortune, I was one of those who could

Doubt, yet doat; despair, yet fondly love.

Cruel as I thought my situation, yet I found there was a state of distraction beyond it; for into such was I thrown by a letter brought me from Mr. Markland, wherein he acquainted me, that he was then at his first stage towards Harwich, where he was going in order to embark for a foreign port, having accepted an employment under one of our ambassadors.

The shock I experienced at the reception of this letter was of so violent a nature, that I cannot even now recollect it without an extreme perturbation of mind.

Our worthy chaplain having just stepped into the ward, discovered it in my countenance; and, in the most pathetic and feeling manner, cautioned me from too frequently calling past transactions to mind, unless with a view to draw a comparison of my distressfully unhappy situation at that time, and the calm composure of my present state, with every hopeful prospect of being received into the world again a worthy member of society; and with that true philanthropy which you, Madam, have ever noted marked his countenance, told me he had made you a promise of writing out the particulars of the history of a sister penitent, of whom you used to take such singular notice, and said, that as he had also promised a copy of it to Lady —, he would wish me to transcribe it in my letter, as I acquainted him I was writing to you. I therefore beg leave to break off at present from the thread of my own narrative, more particularly as it will be some relief to myself in my present state of mind, and begin the particulars of this young lady's life.

THE HISTORY OF MISS —.

She was the favourite daughter of her father; a person of a decent and respectable character in life, who, though he had several children, regarded this with eyes of peculiar tenderness and affection. Pleasing and delicate in her person, she had always hitherto shewn an equally amiable mind, and returned her father's regard with becoming attention. But, alas! an insidious seducer

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soon found the way to her heart ; and, under the delusive pretensions of courtship and marriage, in an unguarded hour, ruined and withdrew her from her father's house. He, in all the frantic rage of distress, sought the child of his tenderest affection. He found, forgave, and brought her home. But, whether through an infatuation for her seducer, (which, however strange, is found but too often the case,) whether through the admonitions of her afflicted parent too repeatedly urged, or through restraint, not known before, once more, in an evil hour, she left her father's house, and soon abandoned by her seducer, plunged into total licentiousness and debauchery.

Her father, who felt such anguish as none but the parental heart can in any degree conceive, now gave up his child as irretrievably lost. Happening, however, some time after, to pass along the street, he saw a young creature, highly dressed, throw herself into a chair, which waited at the door of one of those many infamous houses in this city to convey her to her lodgings after the debaucheries of the place. Let the parent guess what he must have felt, when he perceived this gay victim of licentiousness to be his child ! his favorite child !—his daughter ! He stood struck with horror and amazement, whilst she (pierced, no doubt, to the heart, yet unwilling to humble herself, and confess her guilt) turned from him, and, by her immediate order, was carried off, leaving the parent who had passed so many solicitous hours for her almost petrified with grief, and unable to move !

There is great reason to believe that this occasional, but affecting, interview touched her to the quick, and was the foundation of that prudent resolve which she soon after put in practice. For, the fury of unbridled passion beginning to abate, and the distresses of her detested course of life daily increasing, the early impressions of parental tenderness naturally coincided with these to awaken reflection, and to shew her to herself.

Alarmed at the view, she wished, she determined to return, and try what repentance could do. For which purpose

purpose she applied to the Magdalen House, and found a ready admission. For how could admission be refused to one so young, labouring under such a burden of misery, and with such probable expectations of sincere amendment?

Those expectations were not disappointed: she continued three years in the house; during the whole of which her behaviour was decent, consistent, and commendable. But though reconciled to God, though conscious of the sincerity of her heart, she could find no solid satisfaction till reconciled to the father whom she had so much injured, and to whose soul she had given such unspeakable anguish. The father, however, was now deaf to all her solicitations. In vain she wrote, in vain she pleaded: every effort proved ineffectual to procure her pardon, without which her heart could never know peace.

A person who deeply interests himself in favour of the objects of the charity wrote to her father. The following was the answer he received.

“ Sir,

“ I had the honour of yours, and with it a renewal of my sorrow of heart; which proceeded not from your relation of an amendment of life in a long lost and abandoned child, but from the remembrance of her unhappy fall. Did you but know, Sir, with what care and industry an affectionate father and mother (possessed of but little, perhaps worthy of more) have discharged their duty, there is nothing but your great goodness of heart could induce you to be so generous an advocate for one that has forfeited so much. But what can I say on this afflicting subject, with any degree of propriety, to keep clear of offending the fathers of an unhappy many, while my indignation for the conduct of one causes such perturbation of body and mind, as renders me defenceless both in words and actions?

“ Un-neglected by precept and example, unprovoked by want or ill usage, she sacrificed all that was binding to a lawless unruly passion, and plunged herself into

“ that long scene of misery, which must have been
“ longer still, were she not rescued by the humane
“ hands of this noble charity. Happy is it for her,
“ that you, Sir, have condescended to say, she has ap-
“ proved herself worthy of it; and happier still will
“ she be, if she continues to deserve from those boun-
“ tiful hands which protect, and have led her back to
“ those paths of virtue from whence she strayed.

“ Pardon, me Sir, that I detain you so long on a
“ melancholy subject, persuaded, as I am, that your
“ tenderness of heart has suffered by many such dole-
“ ful tales: and I hope you will forgive me when I
“ say, that I am not sufficiently prepared for the sor-
“ rowful interview you desire with my once most ten-
“ derly beloved daughter. But as your kind and
“ fatherly letter has conveyed some consolation to
“ a long disturbed and afflicted heart, by telling me
“ her repentance has begot compassion in you, and the
“ rest of the worthy governors of that blessed charity,
“ I will not appear so obdurate and unrelenting as to say,
“ that I will never see her; but in time, on her perse-
“ vering in good works, and finishing her reformation,
“ agreeable to the time instituted by that excellent cha-
“ rity, I may not only see her, but also have pity, and
“ restore her to that care and protection, which never
“ departed from me until she departed from them.

“ Thus far, and no farther, am I capable, overwhelm-
“ ed with sorrow, to determine at present; and as vir-
“ tue is its own reward, I know you expect no more
“ than the thanks and prayers of a grateful heart,
“ which shall publicly and privately be paid by me for
“ the prosperity and advancement of that best and most
“ humane of charities; for the preservation of all its
“ members; and particularly for you, Sir, to whom I
“ have the honour to be, &c.

Those who are acquainted with the human heart,
will not be surprised to hear that the heart which dicta-
ted this letter was afterwards reconciled to a daughter
once so much beloved, and returning, like the prodigal,
with true contrition, both to her earthly and her hea-
venly

venly parent. This happy event soon after taking place, the daughter wrote with joy to the same gentleman to whom the father's letter was directed : and we subjoin a part of her letter, as it demonstrates the goodness of her mind.

" Sir,

" The inclosed will shew that the happy reconciliation with my dear father is, to my unspeakable joy, at last effected : and as you, Sir, have been the kind instrument of bringing it about, I should be guilty of the greatest ingratitude, were I to omit the first opportunity of returning you the thanks that such an important service merits ; and believe me, Sir, that, in whatever station it shall please the Almighty hereafter to place me, I shall retain the deepest sense of the many mercies I have had vouchsafed me while life remains, &c."

She did not forfeit these promises. Her heart was sincere, and her reformation real. Received at home with joy, she proved by her whole behaviour the truth of her repentance, and conducted herself in every manner suitable to her circumstances, and agreeable to her parent.

Solicitous for her welfare, he soon after gained her an establishment in a family of worth and distinction, where getting an unfortunate scratch upon the leg, and through attention to her duty neglecting it, bad consequences ensued ; a mortification speedily came on, and an amputation of her leg was found unavoidable. She bore the dreadful tidings with great composure and resignation ; sent to the chapel of the Magdalen Hospital, earnestly requesting the prayers of all her sister penitents for her, and underwent the cruel operation with a patience and resolution which surprised those who performed it.

It is easy to conceive, from a habit of body so wretched as that which rendered the amputation necessary, what must have been the consequences of such an expedient ; a total mortification came on ; and in a few days after she expired : expired with blessings on the

charity, as the great means of her salvation : expired with all that serenity of soul, with all that humility, yet confidence of hope, which nothing but true christian principles can inspire ; but which those principles will always inspire into the breast of the real penitent. The worthy doctor's reflections on this recital is truly pathetic.

Upon this narrative, says he, which is in every particular conformable to truth, I would only beg leave to make one or two observations. The first and most natural one is the great utility of the Magdalen Institution, without which this young creature, thus preserved, and now, we trust, amongst the blessed, in all probability would have been lost ; lost in early youth, before she had seen her twentieth year ; lost in the extremity of suffering here, and lost to all the rewards and comforts of futurity ; and not only herself thus deplorably undone, but her wretched father would have been left to mourn, with the bitterest sorrow, the temporal and the everlasting misery of his beloved child. Who can be insensible to the value and the importance of an institution which thus prevents the direst woe ; which, not only in the present case, but in a variety of others, we have all possible reason to believe, has saved, and will continue to save, many souls from eternal loss ?

Let a second observation from this mournful narrative be carried home to the hearts of those daughters who are blessed with worthy and affectionate parents. Let them learn from hence, what horrid consequences, (consequences in a great degree irremediable in this life, however their ill effects may be totally cancelled in the next) attend a deviation from filial duty. Let them settle it in their hearts, that no love can be equal to the parental ; and that, however the siren voice of seduction woos them to forsake a tender father's roof, however sweet the sound, however alluring the promises, destruction awaits the fatal step, and ruin stands ready to close her gloomy doors upon them !

I now, my dear Madam, resume my own narrative. The distress of my mind was now beyond what any one
can

can comprehend, who has not sacrificed all she did, or ought to hold dear, to one man, whose tenderness seemed for some time to recompence her for all she had relinquished; whose love constituted all her happiness; and who at last, by the most cruel inconstancy, threw her from the airy height of bliss, to which she had conceived he had exalted her, into the lowest abyss of misery.

Before the receipt of this cruel letter, I thought my grief could not admit of increase. To lose Mr Markland's affection appeared to me the heaviest misfortune. I did not then understand how a woman who cannot possess a man's esteem, loses all his regard when he ceases to love her. But to be left with such indifference, a child abandoned without one parting kiss, was a shock too great for my constitution to bear. My weak understanding was so shaken, that for two days I was quite out of my senses. To this a fever succeeded, which was violent, but not lasting.

As soon as my shattered brain grew a little composed, anxiety for my child made me desirous to preserve a life which seemed to promise me nothing but misery. But what would I not have undergone, rather than leave that dear babe friendless and defenceless in a world which was now very low in my estimation! For it is the way of us all, if one person uses us ungratefully, to quarrel with the whole human race; never sensible of universal faults, till we suffer by one to whom we are tenderly attached.

Care for my child rendered me obedient to all the orders of my physician, who told me I must not hope for recovery, without I could compose my mind to some degree of resignation. This argument made me use every means to change the natural current of my thoughts.

My little boy, as the only object now of my affection, and the only inducement for my endeavouring to raise myself out that state of despair, I would have always with me; but how often did that increase my grief, by reminding me of his father! If he smiled on me, I thought

I saw

I saw his father's sweetness, which had charmed my soul; in every endearing action he brought to my remembrance his father's tenderness. If he was diverting, I said to myself, how would these once have delighted his father! If he looked pale, how would this air of sickness have alarmed his father's fondness!

The length of my letter puts me in mind of concluding it; and I am fearful it may have already trespassed on your patience. Should that ever be the case, I must beg it as a particular favour, Madam, that you would acquaint me therewith, and I shall, in consequence, endeavour to draw the narrative of my late unhappy life into a narrower compass; for, believe me, Madam, it is only with a view to give you pleasure that I sometimes dwell on particulars which to you, perhaps, may appear uninteresting. I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your truly obliged Servant,

M. S.



LETTER VI.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

YOU make me happy, my dear Madam, in condescending to assure me, the more I dwell on and lengthen out my unhappy narrative, the more I oblige you, and that you are pleased to think the more it may answer your good intentions as a warning to the young and incautious of our sex. I therefore proceed to say that, in spite of my grief, my fever left me, and I found it necessary to resolve on some means for my child's and my own support. Mr. Markland had left no provision for us; but, as if he justly thought, that after the loss of his affection every thing else was insignificant, he was as regardless of lesser particulars for me, as he imagined I should be for myself.

While Mr. Markland loved, he was generous; and as I was a good economist, I had near one hundred pounds by me; and having some cloaths, which were better than would be required in the way of life into which I intended to enter, I converted them into money; and turned the parlour, with little expence or alteration, into a haberdasher's shop, laying out all my money in stock. I sent my landlord warning that I should quit his house after the necessary notice, intending to take myself a cheaper habitation.

The execution of this purpose was of service to me; it employed my attention, and gave me a subject to think of, which, though productive of no pleasure, yet gave me no pain. I had not ease of mind sufficient to be anxious about my success, every thing appeared too trifling to move me much. As for my child, I wept over him instead of rejoicing; in him I had now no affection but what gave me uneasiness; what I fancied was the source of sublime happiness, I found was productive of the greatest misery; but my sorrows were grown quiet, and I was composedly wretched.

I did

I did not succeed ill in my business. The humbled air which grief gave me, I believe, softened the rigid virtue of my neighbours; and as I sold rather cheaper than most people in the same way of trade, in order to incite them to deal with me, I seemed well established in about two months after I had furnished my little shop.

But great was my surprise, when, one morning, two men entered my house with a distress, and immediately seized my goods!

I was more amazed at this insolence than frightened; for I was sure I had incurred no debts; and therefore told them they must have mistaken the house and person, of which I had no doubt; but greatly was I shocked, when they informed me that they were employed by my landlord, who had never received any rent from the time Mr. Markland took the house, nor payment for the furniture, which, by being a cabinet maker and upholsterer, he had furnished him with; and that he could easily prove that whatever I had belonged to Mr. Markland.

All the horrors of a prison now presented themselves to my imagination. I easily perceived that my stock could not discharge this debt; and with little ceremony was told by these men, that nothing else could save me from a goal; and that I must go with them. What now to do with my child I knew not. To expose it to the colds and damps in so nauseous a place shocked my nature. As for myself, (had no other depended on me,) I should have been less anxious. I had resigned myself to misery, and which way it was brought upon me seemed of little consequence. One relief I immediately felt from this misfortune: the love which I had till now borne to Mr. Markland, whose inconstancy I almost forgave as a weakness in his nature, was entirely obliterated, by so mean and cruel an action as leaving me exposed to such infinite distress; for he could not but know that his absence would determine the landlord to take care of his own interest; and probably I should not have been left so
long

long in quiet possession of the house, but that he might the more certainly get all I had; when my shop was furnished in the best manner I was able.

I now despised the man I could not hate, and no longer felt the pangs of slighted love; but the terrors of my approaching fate took their place. I was weeping over my child, who, frightened at my agonies, was more clamorous in his grief, hung round my neck, and screamed—he knew not why; only he perceived the men were the cause of my affliction; and as they, provoked at the noise he made, began to swear at him, he grew more terrified, and, with the assistance of the lamentations my maid uttered, who thought the degree of grief was to be measured by clamour, the uproar was great enough to bring in an old lady, who came to hire a house the next door to me. She had seen it the day before, and had taken notice of my child, with whom I was standing at the door, and asked me some questions about the neighbourhood, more in appearance for the sake of conversation than curiosity.

This lady, as I said, was attracted by the clamour she heard in my house, and came in to ask the cause of it.

The bailiffs were the most able to speak, and gave her a surly answer; but one which was so much to the purpose, that in a few words they made her understand the whole matter.

She came up to me, and asked if the balance against me was great. I told her I could not tell how that might be, as I knew not what difference would be made in the valuation of the goods, when they came to be appraised, from what they originally cost; but that it ought not to be considerable; for the damage was small, they having been always well used, and kept with great care: that, except this difference, the balance on either side could be trifling; for my stock would answer the rent; but that to one who had nothing, a debt of thirty pounds was as bad as one of three hundred, and must render me equally insolvent.

She

She then asked the men what they designed should become of me till the affair was settled. They replied, I must either go home with them or to gaol.

"Have you nobody," said she, "to be bail for you?" "No one," answered I: for my sister was the only person to whom I could apply; and I could not harbour a thought of making her a greater sufferer by my ill conduct than she already had been; or of running the least hazard of causing any difference between her and her husband; for long before this I imagined she was married. I was sensible that if she knew my distress, she would be anxious to relieve it; but as her husband might not choose to give his money to one who appeared so unworthy, disputes and disgust might arise on the subject.

"It is hard," said the old lady, "that you should know no one who will perform such an act of humanity; and though I am not fond of having any thing to do where the law is concerned, yet (turning to the bailiffs) I cannot withhold my assistance from one who is in so distressful a situation, and who seems born to suffer from the cruelty of mankind. I will bail this young woman," said she; "and will take upon myself the settling her affairs."

Words are too weak to describe my feelings on this occasion. But the sequel will shew that hitherto fatal experience had not yet taught me sufficient caution to distinguish a real benevolent disposition from its too often destructive semblance. It has ever been my misfortune, my dear Madam, to judge too hastily from appearances, except in the instance of my happy and ever-to-be-remembered introduction to you, my temporal saviour! That heaven may bless and preserve a life of such universal philanthropy, is the ardent prayer of, Madam,

Your grateful humble Servant,

M. S.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

CIRCUMSTANCED as I described myself in my last letter, my dear Madam, I was all gratitude; a thousand blessings, and a thousand thanks, I gave the person who thus interfered. But the men were not so ready to accept her offer: they said they must first inquire into her character and substance, and know whether or not she was sufficiently responsible.

"If you have any doubts of that kind," said she, "let the goods be appraised directly: the day is long enough for settling the whole affair."

This proposal was agreed to. My landlord was sent for; my stock in trade was valued by the bills of parcels to which I had receipts, and appraisers determined the value of the furniture.

My benefactress had left me before my landlord came; and as evening drew on, I grew under apprehensions, lest prudence should get the better of charity, and prevent her return; but, before the whole was settled, she came; the balance was drawn, and I remained debtor but about twenty pounds. She paid the money, and said she should require no consideration of me, but a note of hand, in case I should ever be able to pay her; and as I was at a loss where to go that night, offered to take me home in the coach with her.

This additional kindness charmed me; my heart was inexpressibly relieved by such generosity. For the present I forgot the destitute condition I was in: I was delivered from immediate distress; and Mr Markland's baseness had relieved my heart from the tenderness which till then oppressed it; so that I think, entirely penniless as I was, these were much the happiest hours I had enjoyed from the time Mr. Markland's affections began visibly to decline.

E

My

My benefactress took me and my little boy into the coach, and we soon arrived at her house. She told me, that as my spirits had undergone a great deal of fatigue, and she was to have some company that evening, it might, perhaps, be more agreeable to me to retire to my own room, to which she led me, and ordered a servant to see that I had every thing I wanted; and then taking her leave of me, wished me a good night: saying, she feared she should not be able to get to me again that evening. I repeated all the acknowledgements that gratitude could suggest; and wished her a rest equally refreshing to the infinite relief she had given to my despairing mind.

When I was left alone, and began to reflect on the various events of that day, it seemed a general scene of confusion, which had passed in such quick succession that the recollection made me giddy.

The variety of thoughts which all these things suggested to my mind, would have engrossed my attention a long time, had not my little boy interrupted me. The bustle of the day had wearied him. I put him to bed, and that being done, I began to observe the furniture of the room.

The furniture was old and tattered, and every thing very dirty, but once had been handsome. I was surprised at the condition it was in, as I imagined the mistress of the house to be a lady of fortune, from the generosity she had shewn towards me; and from her age, I expected such a degree of oeconomy as would prevent so much dirt and rags; I wondered, therefore, what could occasion this appearance; and flattered myself I might be of some use in doing my best to repair the destruction, which seemed less owing to the ravages of time than to want of care.

A servant, not much more cleanly than my chamber, came to ask me what I pleased to choose for supper. I told her any thing the family had; I begged I might give no additional trouble. "My mistress," said she, "thought you might be weary, and want to go to bed before their supper time, so ordered me to inquire."

"At

"At what time do they sup then," I asked. "It is quite uncertain," answered the servant; "sometimes it is vastly late, but never before eleven."

I had been used to late hours at Lady Markland's, so was not surpris'd. I thought I had got again into the house of a fine lady; and since that was the case, desired a piece of bread and butter, which would be a sufficient supper for me.

My request was not soon complied with; but as I heard many raps at the door, I easily guessed that the servants were busied by the arrival of so much company, or it had made them forget me. It was near eleven o'clock before any one appeared again in my apartment, and then the same maid brought me part of a fowl, with some punch and wine; telling me, that as she had found the company came earlier than common, she thought she had better stay till she could offer me a more comfortable supper than what I had ordered.

I asked her if they had often much company; to which she answered in the affirmative; and added, with an air of satisfaction, she did not believe there was a house in town that had more.

I had observed, while I lived at Sir George Markland's, my lady, and many others, piqued themselves on having a great concourse of people at their houses; and that, to acquire the more honour, they would often stretch the truth as to the numbers that been there the night before; but I was diverted to find this pride descend to a servant, who, by her appearance, must be in the very lowest place in the house; and wondered what advantage she could find in her lady's drums being more frequent or more crowded than other peoples.

Being heartily tired, I went to bed as soon as I had supped; but had not been long asleep, before I was startled at a variety of noises. Some seemed laughing; others scolding; others at romps. I was terrified with the clamour; the first effects of which was jumping out of bed, and bolting the door; and then I could attend to it with a little more composure, but not without a thousand apprehensions,

prehenensions, which, though the house grew pretty quiet about four o'clock in the morning, would not suffer me to get any sleep.

I rose early, and found the family were making themselves amends for the time they had stolen from the night; for nobody came into my room till near ten o'clock; nor had I courage to go out of it, to see if any one was up. The same servant whom I had seen the night before, now made her appearance. I asked her if any disaster had happened which occasioned so much noise at so late an hour? "Nothing particular," she answered. "Is your company always so loud?" said I. "Not always," said the girl; "but sometimes still more so." "Indeed!" cried I. "And pray how often may you have company?" "Oh! every night," answered the girl. "Whatever house may be empty, ours is always full."

My apprehensions had encreased during the whole of this dialogue, and now they were risen to their greatest height; but, to remove all doubt, I asked her whether their company consisted mostly of gentlemen or ladies?

The girl laughed at the foolishness of my question, and told me they had few ladies came there. Not but a gentleman might, if he pleased, bring a lady, and they would be very genteely accommodated: but they seldom chose it, as all their young ladies were so handsome, it would not be easy to find any equal to them.

I was, indeed, now past any doubt. Uncertainty, however anxious, would have been a blessing to this certainty. I thought I should have fainted; and, indeed, I believe nothing could have recalled my senses, which were just fled, but the screams of the servant, who was so used to clamour, that she did not think any moderate noise could be sufficiently expressive of fear; and set up her pipes with such violence, at seeing me sink pale and breathless into a chair that stood by me, that she not only called back my departing spirits, but brought two or three of the young ladies whose beauty she had been boasting of into my room.

As my colour had not returned with my senses, I still looked more like a corpse than one alive. The girl was asked the occasion of this disorder, but could give little account of it. She told them the young gentleman had been asking her questions but the minute before, and she could not imagine what was the matter. My poor little boy, frightened to see his mother look so pale, ran to me, and, by his tender careffes, did more to recover me than all the attention of the young ladies, who held salts to my nose, rubbed my temples, and did all they thought requisite for my relief; but their appearances counteracted their care, by terrifying me more than the other could revive me.

Uncomb'd their locks, and squalid their attire;
Unlike the trim of love, or gay desire.

The dirty rags in which they were cloathed shewed their wretchedness. Their faces, which in the evening were to shine with borrowed charms, were now the emblems of decay and sickness. Swoln excess, riotous intemperance, and foul misrule, were imprinted in each countenance.

I do not believe I could have quite recovered myself while they were in my sight, but, fortunately for me, they were called to breakfast, from which my indisposition excused me, and I was indulged with a dish of tea in my own room. When I recollect the wretched situation I was unfortunately drawn into, and reflect on the horrors of mind which then surrounded me, I can never enough bless and praise my God, that he gave me strength of mind sufficient to prevent me from laying violent hands on myself; but it was his good pleasure to preserve me for further trials; and at length, through his mercy, to guide me, by your means, my good lady, to this heavenly place of safety. Adieu, my dear Madam, and believe me ever the

Most grateful of your Servants,

M. S.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

TO describe what were my thoughts, my dear Madam, on being left alone, as mentioned in my last letter, is a difficult task. Suffice it to say, the distraction of my mind found some vent by tears and lamentations. I now felt a degree of distress beyond what I had yet experienced, or ever feared. How severely did I arraign myself of folly, in having conceived no suspicion of this wretched woman! and quarrelled with my heart, for having seen her action in no such very strange light, as to suppose it must arise from any thing but generosity. I thought that in the same situation I should have done like her, and therefore was grateful, but not surpris'd. So far was my candour, in thus judging of her, from administering any comfort to me, that I wished my temper more suspicious, though rendered so by defects in my own heart, from which it was now free. Indeed, in this case, the most common prudence might have preserved me; but I was rendered so senseless by the terrors of my situation, that I was blind to every other danger.

I shall not tire you, Madam, with endeavouring to describe the agitation of my mind, which was far beyond all power of description; but only say, that the prison I had so much feared now appeared to me an eligible asylum; and all the hopes I had, were, that if I was found refractory to the purposes of the person who had thus bought me of myself, resentment might tempt her to throw me into the goal from which she had so cruelly relieved me.

After breakfast was over, the woman whom the night before I had beheld with reverence and gratitude as my noble benefactress came into my room, and taking hold of my hand with a fawning affectation of kindness, told me she was sorry to find I had been so ill;

ill : she supposed it was occasioned by what I had suffered the day before ; but she did not doubt but I should soon recover, as my mind would forget all past disasters in her house, which was a temple dedicated to pleasure ; and continued to speak in such intelligible terms, that no farther explanation was necessary.

To sit and hear the profession of such abandoned sentiments was really shocking beyond expression. Criminal as I had been, my detestation to this way of life was as great if I had been more consistently virtuous. I informed her, that she was disappointed in her views ; but offered, if she would forbear all attempts to induce me to comply, that I would with pleasure submit to the lowest offices in her house, or rather what she esteemed the lowest, and perform the part of a menial servant, till she herself should acknowledge that I had amply paid my debt.

She told me that every word I spoke more fully proved my folly ; for I must be extremely silly indeed, to think she would be contented with my saving her three or four pounds a year, when she did not despair of my gaining her as many hundreds ; for the first year, at least ; and after that, by paint and dress, I might make a very attracting figure among her girls.

All that prayers and intreaties could do I tried without success ; and when that failed, I endeavoured to provoke her to send me to prison ; but all to no other purpose, than, as she said, to shew my folly, in supposing she had not taught every passion as well as every principle to be subservient to her interest.

All I uttered had no other effect than to make her give orders that I should not be suffered to stir out of the house.

While I opposed her she set me at defiance ; and threatened me with immediate revenge, which she was too able to execute, having every one at her command, and no one to defend me. I therefore tried to delay what I could not repel ; and, by promising to endeavour to get the better of my reluctance, prevailed upon her to allow me time to learn to command my behaviour,

which, in my present disposition, might disgust those she chose I should please.

Under this pretence, I obtained liberty to live entirely in my own chamber for a whole month, hoping still that some fortunate accident might relieve me, but all in vain. At the end of that time she assured me she would not be fooled any longer, and made me dress myself with more than usual care, in a gown and ornaments which she had provided for me, and told me she would absolutely bring a gentleman to see me that evening, whose generosity she so much extolled, that I had some hopes I might find him generous indeed; not in lavishing money on a bawd, but in relieving the distressed. I found I had been promised to him, which, though it proved that he paid high, was but a poor dependence for my expectations.

This wretched woman kept her word with a diabolical exactness. She introduced the gentleman pretty early in the evening; for expectation made him come sooner than her visitors usually did; and she retired. I was sorry to see how much this man was struck with my appearance, as it in a great degree damped my hopes; but despair encouraged me to proceed, and I began to attack his compassion in the strongest manner I could, by uttering all the sentiments of my soul. I knoeled at his feet, used tears and prayers to soften him, and did my utmost to excite his generosity.

At first he seemed to think all this was mere hypocrisy, with a design to raise the value of his conquest; but he soon found I was perfectly sincere, and with joy I perceived him affected. This animated me still more, and I pursued my entreaties till he granted them, and told me he would desire no more of me, than that I would inform him how in such a disposition I could come into that house.

I then related to him the whole affair, suppressing only the manner in which I had lived with Mr. Markland, whom I called my husband; not, I think, out of pride. I was too much humbled to attempt to conceal even my crimes; but I feared, if he knew this circumstance,

cumstance, he would have less regard to my petition, and think my having offended with one man, gave every other a right to expect a ready compliance with their expectations.

When I had ended my story, the gentleman told me I might judge of his compassion from the mortification he had inflicted on himself; for that, though he was much attached to the sex in general, and had always been so, he had never seen a woman that he thought half so lovely as myself; that she who had the disposing of me, was sufficiently sensible of my charms, as appeared by the price she had set upon me, which, however, he was much more willing to lose, than to give up his title to me; but, to shew me he could be generous to virtue as well as to vice, he would relinquish both, and, at my desire, pretend himself better satisfied with my conduct than he had reason to be: for I had begged he would not betray me to the woman, whom I now looked upon with as much horror as I had once done with joy and gratitude.

That he might be the better credited, he sat with me near two hours after he had made me this promise. I wished he would have secured me from persons less generous than himself, by redeeming me from this horrid place; but durst not hint my desire, for fear of offending him; and he stifled my hopes, by observing to me how impossible it was for me to escape out of it; for that the money she had laid down for me would be but a small part of my debt; she would charge so much for my board, and the cloaths I then had on, that would run it up to a much more considerable sum.

After having represented all this to me, and the impossibility of my prevailing with other men as I had done with him, he endeavoured to persuade me to submit patiently to my lot, and not to grant to one less generous what I denied to him, promising that I should share his bounty; whereas it commonly was only dispensed to the person who claimed the power of selling us.

He

He bore my refusal of this proposal as generously as he had done the first, and took his leave of me in the politest manner; and, if I may be allowed to form any judgement from his appearance, with real concern for me.

As soon as the gentleman was gone from the house, the old woman, and some of the young ones who were disengaged, came to me, and carried me down into a small room to supper, where none but ourselves were admitted; not so much to indulge me, as a reward for my good behaviour, because I was thought too valuable while new to be exposed to common eyes.

My odious companions were in very good humour; and I was so delighted with, and encouraged by, my success, that I had never before appeared so easy. I flattered myself I should continue as fortunate as I began, and the effect this hope had upon me, gave room for a supposition that I was grown better reconciled to my way of life. I was not to continue long in doubt whether my arguments would be always equally prevalent; the next day brought fresh occasion for my rhetoric. The appearance of the man was less encouraging; he wanted the politeness of manner, and good natured countenance, which was remarkable in the other. I was not, however, turned from my purpose by my fears of failing in it: on the contrary, I was animated by despair more than before by hope, and, by my tears and aversion, extinguished all thoughts of pleasure or of love from his rugged breast: but leaving me with curses, he went to the old woman, and bestowing some oaths on her, made her refund the money she had received from him.

This threw her into a violent rage; which not being able to vent on him, I must necessarily fall the victim. She brought up with her into my room three of the young women, who, angry that I should, by my conduct, shew a dislike of theirs, were fit to assist her in executing her wrath on me. Accordingly they fell on me with the utmost fury, and beat me in the most merciless

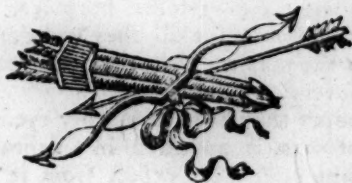
ciless manner, till one of them hit me such a blow on the temples, as struck me senseless to the ground.

How long I might continue in this situation I cannot acquaint you, Madam: but, against I have the pleasure of writing my next letter, shall endeavour to recollect every particular circumstance which happened after my being brought to myself. I must now beg leave to conclude this letter, by assuring you, Madam, that I shall ever retain the most grateful sense of your repeated kindness to me, and am,

Madam,

Ever Yours,

M. S.



LETTER IX.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

MY last letter, my dear Madam, brought my unfortunate life down to that period of it where the wretched females of the infernal house I was in had wrecked their vengeance on me by the vilest and most opprobrious language, and by blows which finally bereaved me of my senses, and I fell motionless to the ground: but as murder was a crime which they were fearful of committing in this infamous house, they were alarmed lest they had killed me, and fearing the consequences of their rage, put me to bed, and took all possible care to bring me to myself.

As soon as they had done so, I found my person was one general bruise. I was so sore I knew not how to lie or move; but my greatest pain was in my eye, near which the last blow was given: it was soon so swelled up I could not see; and as defacing me did not all answer these wretches' purposes, they omitted no care to remedy the ill they had done, plaistering me up in the manner they thought most likely to hasten my recovery.

I was in hopes they had put out my eye. Shocking as the thought was, it appeared in a desirable light to me, as I might reasonably expect from it a total dismission from that house, where I could be of no value when so disfigured. I had suffered too much by my beauty to be anxious for the preservation of it, and one eye might guide me to a more comfortable livelihood than I was likely to gain in the house where I then was.

These thoughts made me take off the things they had applied to my eye, whenever I was alone, if possible, to prevent my cure; but, in spite of my endeavours, the swelling abated, and I found my sight had received no hurt; but the blood settling round it, I had such a
black

black eye, as rendered me too rueful a spectacle to be produced. This accident obliged me to be concealed above a month; for it was thought imprudent to shew me till I was in full beauty. This delay was precious; and I would have endured another beating for the like benefit; but they had suffered too severely already for this exertion of their power, therefore they resolved upon a method less detrimental to my person.

As soon as I was thought to look tolerably well, the infernal woman told me that all my resistance would be in vain, that my ingratitude had quite disgusted her, and that she was resolved no longer to shew me any indulgence; but would expose me to the addresses of people too low and brutal to regard my tears, till I was broke of my niceness, and would send my child to the officers of the parish to which it belonged; for she should no longer gratify me with its company when I shewed so little consideration for her.

These menaces were dreadful indeed; and, to talk of exposing my little darling to the cruelty of parish officers and nurses was too much to bear. Enraged at such a monster, I replied, the law would grant me some redress against such inhumanity.

"The law, thou idiot!" answered she. "Dost thou take lawyers for knights-errant, who have nothing to do but deliver distressed damsels! Know that money only can obtain justice; and those who cannot buy must go without it. The redress of the law is out of the reach of poverty. Content yourself; there is no law for you. But I shall not give myself the trouble of saying any more to you. I give you till to-morrow to chuse; either determine to conquer your squeamishness, or I must send your brat away, and deliver you up to the first man who will disregard all your tears and intreaties. Your will shall make no other difference in the case than in the degree of your lovers, and your brat's fate."

With these words she left me to consider the alternative. The dear babe understood something of being sent from me; and running to me, hung round my

my neck, crying he would not go away without me, and begged me not to let that woman take him.

Alas! dear innocent, I did not mean it; I could much sooner have parted with my life. The wretch had now found the means of subduing my resolution: delicacy, (for by that name, not by the sacred one of virtue, I must call my resistance, after a conduct so criminal as mine;) delicacy, I say, gave way to maternal love; nor could the latter boast any great triumph; for I had no prospect of gaining any advantage by my farther perseverance; on the contrary, I was only like to be exposed to greater insults.

This declaration of my resolution was received the next day with great satisfaction. I was flattered and caressed, and my child fondled; but I could not be sensible to kind treatment so obtained.

In this detestable house I had remained about a month after this, when the old woman was taken ill of a violent fever, occasioned by her having eat and drank immoderately for some nights successively. This illness put a stop to her trade; and in three days carried her into a world where one cannot think of her without horror.

As soon as she was dead, a relation came to look into her effects, who had been ashamed to own any connection with her infamy; but at her death was willing to receive the profits arising from her crimes.

By this accident we were all set at liberty. What became of the rest I know not; I was too glad to get clear of them all to make any enquiries; but, for my own part, my joy at this release was beyond expression.

The best cloaths that were worn by us were sold; but those of less value were given amongst us; and the notes of hand, and such other obligations as had been used as the means of getting us into her power, were cancelled; the purpose of them being too well known to her relation.

I was quite destitute of money; for as our pockets were searched every morning, what presents any gentlemen made us were sure to be taken away; therefore I
sold

sold the best gown that had fallen to my share, in order to support me till I had found some other means of gaining a subsistence.

Sensible that I should find great difficulty in maintaining myself and child, I took the cheapest lodging I could find, only mending it by cleanliness. I then inquired for plain work, but received every where for answer, that they could not trust their things to a stranger: they were acquainted with people enough who wanted such employment; they need not give it to a person they knew nothing of.

This was a melancholy answer: and I now thought I would try to get a place: but when I offered myself, one said I was too handsome; another said that I appeared too genteel for such a place as I offered for, (not daring to attempt any high one, as having no hopes to get it,) and there must be something very bad in my conduct, or I could not be reduced to such low services. Those who were not deterred by my appearance, asked what recommendation I had, or who would give me a character.

In this manner I was repulsed from every door; and found that one who can do no work, but what great numbers of others do as well, may be reduced to want employment. I now wished I had learnt of my sister a variety of works, some of which might have afforded me a support; people being less cautious with those they employ for things which they cannot easily get done elsewhere.

Those wishes were, however, vain. Oh! my dear Madam, think what must have been the situation of mind of an unfortunate young person, willing to earn a livelihood by the most humiliating employ, and yet, from one false, one imprudent step, brought to a situation that no one would even condescend to give a civil answer to, much less take her into their houses in any sort of employment. What blessings therefore (if not in this life) must hereafter be in store for persons of such enlarged minds, who, contrary to the general practice of the world, has the generosity of sentiment,

to rescue a helpless and unfortunate female, forsaken of all the world besides, and, in the end, placing her in an eligible situation of life! Such as you, Madam, and such as you only, who are in the daily practice of this virtue, can feel. May heaven ever watch over such exalted goodness is the constant prayer of,

Madam,

Your faithful humble servant.

M. S.



LETTER X.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

YOU would perceive, my dear Madam, at the conclusion of my last letter, that I was reduced to the manifest danger of starving. I should have attempted the most laborious work ; but no one would try me, as to what, I am afraid, I should have acquitted myself but ill in, though I offered my labour at half price ; but even my industry was made an argument against me. I must, they said, be very bad, to be reduced to that ; and they supposed I intended to steal the other part of my wages.

In this deplorable condition I determined to apply to my sister. I did not now live in actual sin, and therefore could do it with the more courage. By enquiring at the milliner's where I had seen her, I learnt her abode, and thither I went. Variety of misfortunes had altered me extremely. My sister was in her shop, and rejoiced to see me, hoping, by my venturing to her again, that I had reformed my conduct ; but my changed countenance shocked her, and rendered her reception of me more melancholy, but not less kind. Before we had time to interchange many words, her husband came in, who guessing at me by the description she had given him, very abruptly told me, " I was not fit company for his wife, and desired I would not frequent his house ; for all the ties of kindred were broken by my infamous course of life !"

My spirits were lowered by distress, and, I may say, by hunger ; for I had tasted nothing for above twenty-four hours. This cruel reproach, so ill-timed, struck me to the heart. I was not able to make any answer ; but, to avoid increasing his anger, which seemed falling on his wife for having received me, I withdrew almost drowned in tears, and scarcely able to support the weight of my afflicted body.

A good woman passing by me, as I was dragging myself along, and sobbing as if my heart would break, being moved at my distress, put her hand into her pocket, and pulling out a shilling, asked me if that would do me any good.

It is easy to be imagined that I received it with joy and gratitude. In my distressed condition, a less sum would have been a great relief. She seemed happy in the good she had done, and said, "she wished she had more for me." I blessed her for what she had given me, and we parted.

I stopped in my way to buy some food for myself and child with this timely supply, and was there overtaken by a young woman, who told me she belonged to my sister, who, having given her a wink after I went out of the shop, she guessed it was designed as a command to find out where I lived, and therefore had followed me.

I soon satisfied her curiosity; and then inquired into the temper of my brother-in-law, which alarmed me for my sister's happiness. She told me she had never seen him so much out of humour before; that it was easy to see he was of a very jealous disposition; but her mistress's conduct was so extremely prudent, that he had never had an opportunity of taking offence; and the entire confidence he had in her, and his sincere affection for her, got the better of a warmth natural to him; so that, by the excellence of her behaviour, and the sweetness of her disposition, no married people lived more happily together; and she attributed his treatment of me to a sort of jealousy, which made him dislike my having any intercourse with his wife, as he imagined me not so prudent.

I could not from my heart blame him; but said I hoped my future conduct would plead my excuse; and expressed the fears I really felt, lest my going there should occasion any uneasiness between him and my sister, or make her unhappy by awakening her affection for me.

Oh,

"Oh, Madam," said the young woman, "it will admit of no awakening; for my mistress is continually talking of you, and weeping over your remembrance, whenever my master is not present; for he does not like to hear her mention you. Some time ago she sent me into the street where you did live, to inquire after you; but the account I received was such as increased her affliction!"

"What was told you?" said I.

"I do not know how to answer you," replied she; "but I was informed you was gone to a bad house."

"I was, indeed," said I; "but not knowingly."

"However blamable I have been there, I am sure I deserved compassion; and whoever knows all I have suffered, if they are not strangers to pity, will forgive me my faults, in consideration of the punishment they have brought with them."

The good-natured girl could not forbear joining her tears with mine; and perhaps curiosity would have detained her longer, could she have hoped to have learnt any farther particulars; but she must see I was not in a condition to talk much, and I was in haste to return to my child, and carry him home some food; though he stood not in the same need as myself, for having a little bread left, I had given it him that morning, and that sufficed for a tolerable meal.

The same young woman came to my lodgings the next day. Though it was a wretched hole, it pleased her by its cleanliness. My poor little boy she admired extremely; but I could not help feeling distressed at having reason to be ashamed of a child of which so many great families would be vain: but his charms could not wipe off the infamy of his birth; an infamy which in justice belongs only to the parents.

As soon as we were seated, she delivered me a letter from my sister, wherein she acquainted me, "that she could no longer find any comfort in plenty, since she might not impart it to me. That as all her stock in trade belonged to her husband, she could not, without being guilty of a criminal injustice, attempt

“tempt to appropriate to herself any thing out of what she sold; and that, as her expences had always, by choice, been very small, it was but little she should be able to assist me with at present, as her husband would be watchful; but that she hoped, in month or two, he might have me less in his thoughts, and then she should find the means of supplying me more suitably to her own inclinations.”

This was mixed with expressions infinitely kind, and very valuable, as coming from the sincerest of hearts. She had, I found, never been used to ask him for any money. When she bought any thing, the bill was brought to him, and he paid it, and would have done so with pleasure if it had been a much greater sum. If she had any immediate call, she took it out of the produce of the shop, and in settling the account told him what it was for. There was such intire harmony between them, that this became her custom as the easiest way: but now she regretted it extremely, and yet knew not how to break through it.

I saw her difficulty plainly; it was insurmountable; and I had nothing left me, but to intreat her to run no hazards for me, for that nothing could recompence me for causing the least uneasiness between her and her husband.

She desired me not to write, lest the letter should fall into his hands; and told me she would venture at nothing more than a verbal message, till she had brought him into a better disposition towards me: so, in compliance with her request, my answer was only by word of mouth.

Few questions was requisite to inform my sister's messenger of my great poverty, so she remained not long with me.

From time to time she visited me, bringing such little relief as my sister could secretly bestow, but what scarcely sufficed to pay for my lodging. However, this was a great consolation to me; for little as the expence might sound, it was a heavy burden on me, who neither had any thing, nor the means of gaining it; and my land-
lady's

lady's provident spirit made her require a week's pay in hand, not chusing to give any a credit. Nor could I blame the woman; for where they are forced to let their rooms to such indigent persons as I was, if they were not to be rigidly exact, they would seldom receive any rent.

My sister's situation being now added to the other impediments which prevented me from obtaining any support, I was reduced below hope. Willing and able to work, and yet to starve for want of employment, seemed a hard fate: but it touched no heart but my own. In this extremity, the humanity shewn me by a stranger in the street determined me to try if casual charity would afford me any relief; and, in the bitterness of my soul, I set out with my child to ask the charitable benefactions of passengers.

But here my success was small: I found that beggars had a society amongst themselves, that the town was divided into so many shares, and to every one was appointed their particular district, from whence they drove every interloper, by means too formidable for me to contend with, who feared almost equally their oaths, and their more forcible methods. Thus I had no places left me but such as were so little frequented, they were not thought worth their notice. Like the first planters in a colony, they divided amongst themselves all but the barren lands.

Among the few who passed where I durst attempt to beg, I seldom obtained any thing but reproaches for my idleness, in begging at an age when I was so capable of working. It was to no purpose that I told them I desired nothing so much as work, and intreated them to try me, by giving me any employment. They would answer, that they saw I was newly entered upon that trade, and it would be a shame to encourage me in it, as then I should never leave it off.

Sometimes I was so fortunate as to obtain a few halfpence from people whose compassion got the better of their reason, and who durst not give me an absolute refusal, for fear I was, indeed, as near starving as I said

said I was: but these small and uncertain benefactions would not preserve two persons alive, though used in the most sparing manner. Sometimes for two or three days I could not procure a farthing.

One time, when I was reduced to the last extremity, myself almost starved, and my child in the same condition, and piercing my heart with his cries, as the last effort, I dressed myself neatly, and went out to try if I should have any better success as a higher degree of beggar, and left my poor boy with an old woman in the same house, who used to take care of him in my absence, though she was too poor to relieve his necessities.

I attacked many of my own Sex, who told me they never gave to begging gentlewomen. I then addressed myself to the other, and received a refusal from the first. The second told me if I would go with him to the next tavern, I should be satisfied with his generosity.

I answered him that he mistook my purpose: the smallest alms would content me; but that I could not leave that street. This occasioned some altercation. Each kept to their resolution; till at last he produced five shillings to my view, to strengthen his arguments. A sum then in my estimation so considerable, at length prevailed.

I returned home to my famished child as soon as possible, carrying food with me, that I might receive some reward for money so ill gotten; and I confess my recompence was great in seeing the dear babe, almost at the gates of death, revive as he eat, and the smiles of joy, by degrees, take place of the anguish which the pains of hunger had imprinted on his lovely face.

To you, ye ungenerous of my own sex, let me appeal, and let me tell you there are many unfortunate females in this very predicament, who are daily and nightly under the dire necessity of prostitution for the sake of bare support; and who would gladly be encouraged to embrace any situation, rather than continue in that which they have unfortunately been brought

brought into by the same arts, which, had they been used to many of you of the most rigid cast of mind, would have proved too successful.

Would such, my dear Madam, copy your benevolent commiseration for their own sex, what numbers might be reclaimed, what numbers rescued from inevitable prostitution! Would to God that the delicacy of your mind would condescend to make the benevolence of your daily transactions a public pattern for our sex, who have less feeling, and consequently less humanity.

I have the honour to be, Madam,

Ever your grateful servant,

M. S.



LETTER XI.

Magdalen Hospital, 1763.

HUMILIATING as my situation was, which I described in my last letter, my dear Madam, I preferred the trade of begging so much to the making a traffic of my person, that I endeavoured, by pursuing it, to make this little fund hold out, but without success. I was at last attacked by the beadles, who, receiving no gratuities from me, declared they would execute the rigours of their office if they saw me there again. Thus the little liberty I before had in this occupation was much restrained, and my gains sunk almost to nothing.

The only consolation I had, was in the hope that my sister would be allowed to countenance me so far, that by her recommendation I might procure some employ; but every time her messenger came, disappointment accompanied her. But still I hoped on, and was often led by it to the utmost extremity of famine, till, no longer able to support it, I resolved to try the means which had once succeeded when I did not aim at it. How often shocked at the odiousness of my purpose, have I turned back, determined to suffer myself to die, rather than preserve my life in such a manner! but when I returned home, and saw the distress of my poor child, every other evil appeared light in comparison of his sufferings; and I again fled from the anguish I felt at the sight of him.

I seldom had far to go, before I met with some gentleman, who, though hard hearted to my distress, would be indulgent to his own vice. I often thought the cleanly simplicity of my dress (for I had no ornaments) pleased more than the tawdry decorations of the women who generally follow that course; for while a man courts our vice, his reason hates our impudence.

I was

I was sensible that, by entering into a society of prostitutes, I might gain a settled subsistence; but I could not think of engaging in a way of life I detested. I still hoped some means would at last relieve my necessities, and that I should not always be reduced to prostitution, to which I could not bring myself to consent, till the severer pains of hunger, and the still sharper pangs I endured from those my heart's darling felt, got the better of the little delicacy I still had remaining. There could not be a more sparing manager than I was of what I gained, as, while it lasted, I was freed from a course of life most odious to me.

In this manner I lived for near three months. The sobriety of my behaviour at home giving no suspicion to the people where I lodged, who were not used to be over-curious in prying into the lives of their lodgers, which perhaps would seldom bear a strict scrutiny. I concealed it equally from my sister; sensible, that if she knew it, the desire of bringing me out of such infamy and suffering, would drive her to any extremities, to the hazard of all her conjugal happiness. The vexation I had given her, and still gave her, was one of my strongest afflictions; therefore I could not for any consideration make her a greater sufferer.

One day, when I was reduced so low, that I had not sufficient to purchase a supper for myself and child, my landlady came up into my room, and invited us to drink tea and sup with her, it being her birth-day. Never did a royal birth-day give such joy to the vainest lady. I do not suppose the birth of a child ever was more welcome to the person most anxious for an heir, than this good woman's anniversary rejoicing was to me. We readily obeyed her invitation; and I was too well pleased with the entertainment to criticise the conversation of my company.

A little before supper a man entered, who said he was just come from the new hospital; so he called it; and that every thing was now completely finished, but he fancied it would be a long time before it was full.

"Do not talk of it," said my virtuous landlady. "I have no patience with the gentlemen who give encouragement to such wicked wretches; starving is too good for them."

I, who knew so well what starving was, thought this was almost too cruel a sentence for any crime; and begged to know who the wretches were the spoke of.

I was answered with all imaginable plainness, and felt, that, coarse as the name was, I had too good a right to it, and therefore was enough concerned in the conversation to enquire what gave my landlady's virtue such offence. I then first heard of this blessed charity. I made all necessary enquiries about it; and could scarcely contain the joy I felt at the smallest hopes of being one of the objects that should be relieved by it.

Sorrow had robbed me of many a night's rest. Joy had a good title to a tribute I had so seldom paid it. I could not shut my eyes that night; and the next morning, as soon as I thought the secretary's office would be open, I went thither; not without fears that my child would be a bar to my admission, for I had heard of no provision being made for children.

My good fortune was without alloy, by the means of meeting with you there, my good lady. I was not only accepted, but was told I might come the next day but one after, and my child should be taken care of.

To form an adequate notion of the rapture I felt, a person should have been reduced to the same excess of misery. My soul overflowed with gratitude, and my countenance shone with joy. It is true I found I must part with my child; but then I could have no doubt but he would be far better taken care of, than I could ever expect he should be while he depended on me. For his sake I could part with him, and should find a constant consolation for the loss of him, in thinking how well he would be educated and provided for.

The satisfaction of my heart was so visible, that, at my return home, my landlady enquired what had made
so

so great an alteration in me, for she had before often taken notice of my melancholy; and used to tell me, she wondered what could make one so young and so pretty look so dismal. I once told her, very frankly, that being so young and so pretty were the very things that made me so; but this I found was a riddle to her, which I did not chuse to explain; nor did I now think proper to acquaint her with the real reason for the alteration she observed, but informed her, that within two days I was to go to a good place, which I had obtained that morning.

I wrote a letter to my sister, acquainting her where I had applied for an asylum, and of the success my application had met with; and added, that a course of regularity would so far wash out the infamy from my reputation, that her husband might in time suffer me to see her; which would always be necessary to my happiness, but could never contribute to it, till she was at liberty to act in that respect according to the dictates of her own heart, without the least chance of giving offence to the man on whom her happiness then depended.

This letter I gave to my landlady the morning I left the house, desiring her to deliver it to the young woman who used to come from my sister the next time she called there; and then I delivered my child where I was ordered, which I confess cost me many tears; for the tenderness of the mother got the better of true maternal love, which should have made me rejoice in this separation: that severe pang over, I came hither, and was received with a degree of humanity beyond my expectation. I expected relief; but I found from this good matron tenderness and pity, of which I was the only object: but a very short time increased the society, and rendered her humanity the more extensive.

Thus you see, my dear Madam, in compliance with your desires, I have exposed all my crimes and follies, and given a strong proof how much evil one bad action draws along with it: nor was I sensible of my wickedness when I applied to be received into this place: I

sought it as a refuge from distress and misery: my heart grieved, but did not repent till I came hither, where I was shewn my sins in their blackest colours, awakened to repentance by a sense of guilt, and was taught to apply for pardon to him who came on earth to save sinners.

Having thus, my dear Madam, gone through the narrative of that unfortunate life which you was the blessed means of preserving from utter ruin and destruction, I shall, as you requested me, proceed to mention some few circumstances of other unfortunate females, who have been rescued from destruction by timely application to this blessed place, with such reflections and observations thereon as you were pleased to flatter me I was so capable of, the merits of which, if any there are to be found in them, I am in a great measure indebted to the worthy gentleman who, at your request, so frequently condescends to converse with me on the subject.

Since I had the good fortune to be placed here by your means, my dear Madam, many are the numbers which have been reclaimed by being admitted; a great part of which do not appear to deserve, or to have been ranked amongst veteran or incorrigible sinners.

It is true, many of them have not had the unspeakable advantages of education, the tender care of parents, nor the wise directions of solicitous friends: but, left to be tost on the billows of this world, have been ship-wrecked on vice, and no wonder, having no friend in their early years to set them aright.

Others again have been deluded into the road of ruin by the most flattering and delusive promises, (as was my own case,) such as few unsuspecting hearts, perhaps, could have withstood; and when undone, have been left by their cruel seducers a miserable prey to infamy and distress; and some so very young, that it is impossible to conceive their minds hardened against good impressions. Indeed, I may with truth say, the most part of those who have been taken in here have shewn themselves so far from being hardened, that they have expressed the utmost detestation of their way of life; and
some

some with such tender and affecting sentiments, as would do no discredit to the most rigid virtue.

But, alas! wretched and ruined, introduced to shame and sorrow, reputation and virtue lost, cast off and abandoned by all, whither could they fly, or where obtain relief? Perhaps, too, (as was also my own case,) their anguish and misfortunes have been aggravated by the necessity of supporting a helpless infant, heir to it's mother's infamy and sufferings! Oh, dreadful alternative to the mother, either to see her child, her much-loved, though unfortunate, child, perish with hunger and with thirst, or to obtain it's support by the horrors of prostitution! Yet to this dire necessity many broken-hearted mothers, as well as myself, have been reduced; and thus the best and most tender parental affection has reigned in the poor woman's breast, while the poor afflicted wretch has been compelled to a way of life most detestable and shocking to her.

You, my dear Madam, would not doubt of the reformation of such a one, if an opportunity to reform, and to regain her credit in the world, could be given to her; but to you, and such as you, my dear Madam, it is only given to think thus generously of the unfortunate of your own sex. Those of the most rigid and the most obdurate kind, were they to behold a poor harmless animal fallen into distress, and suffering in misery, and were able to reach out their hand, and to help it, would I am sure have so much compassion as not to suffer themselves to pass by it unregarded. How much more does it behove them, then, to reach out their hands to the relief of the unfortunate part of their own sex when in their power; and if fallen into the pit of extreme distress, without any hand to relieve, with but few hearts to compassionate, and, if unrelieved speedily, perish in the utmost misery, and breathe out, perhaps, from polluted bodies, more polluted souls, into a world of utter and everlasting woe; when, by a timely interference of such benevolent persons as yourself, Madam, they would be preserved from those scenes of horror! But you, who

have happily persevered in the pleasing paths of virtue; you can best tell the comforts arising from so delightful a conduct, and may easily guess the miseries of a different state. You, who have known the fatal pleadings of passion, can more easily pity them whom those pleadings have seduced and destroyed. And you, who are possessed of all the sweetneses and delicacies of a tender mind, and a happier state, can more easily guess the extreme misery which must arise to a female heart, from the foulness and horror of promiscuous prostitution; and surely will, on these accounts, be ready to reach out your pitying hand to save from distress such of your own sex, whenever hereafter a favourable opportunity may offer; and while those who are happily married feel the soft yearnings of the mother for her child that was suckled at her breast, or glow with the tender warmth of a sister's love, and the generous affection of a beloved friend and companion, think of the many unhappy mothers who are weeping for their lost daughters, some of whom may be lost beyond all possibility of hope; think of the joy you yourselves would feel on the recovery of a child or a friend, thus saved from destruction by the benevolent hand of commiseration. Some here are, who, by the base and treacherous arts of merciless seducers, were overcome by every unlawful method; by vows, by promises, and by oaths, won their unsuspecting, honest, gentle hearts, unpractised and estranged by guile! won and abandoned them to sore destruction.

Let me not omit giving you, Madam, an account of a most amiable young creature, just in her sixteenth year, who was admitted into this house. Sometime ago her conduct was humble and blameless, such as became and denoted the penitent. After her admission, she had the happiness to be reconciled to a mother who had felt the severest sorrow for her misconduct, who affectionately loved, and was beloved by her child. Not long since she was seized with a mortal disease, which she bore with cheerfulness, fortitude, and resignation. When she perceived the hour of death

death approaching, she earnestly desired to see her widowed parent, and to take her last farewell. As soon as it was possible, the afflicted mother came; the soul of the daughter seemed to revive at the voice of her parent. The interview was pathetic and affecting: none present could refrain from tears: but it was scarcely passed, scarce had the tender parent pressed the cold and trembling lips of her child, before the fluttering soul quitted its earthly habitation; as if it had only staid to pay this tribute, and to perform this last office of filial duty and love.

Parental affection then, and christian joy, strove with each other in the mother's breast. For awhile she spoke not; she could not speak. Tears at length burst forth: she wept: she could not but weep for her daughter once lost, but now doubly precious to her, by having been found, and restored to obedience and virtue. She could not but weep for her only daughter, thus early cut off from her, when she had formed pleasing views of their happiness and comfort together. "Yet let me not weep," said the parent; "rather let me rejoice, and bless the goodness of God! Had my child perished in her state of sin, had she been cut off amidst prostitution, disease and misery, what could have supported my soul? Now, by the blessings of this heavenly charity, I have seen her die in such a manner that I cannot doubt her happiness with God. I will not weep for thee, therefore, my child, my dearest child! Blessed, for ever blessed be God, who has saved thee from destruction, and reached out his merciful hand to rescue thee from woe everlasting! Blessed, for ever blessed be those into whose hearts he put it to open the doors of this house of repentance. May those our benefactors for ever be blessed; and may their good hearts be refreshed with the knowledge of many, many daughters dying true penitents like mine. May they live to have the constant and fervent prayers of many, many parents made happy like me!" It is impossible for me to add any thing to this interesting relation, (which I received from our

our worthy chaplain,) but again repeating my wishes, that the ladies in general would, according to their abilities, encourage this laudable, this charitable institution, which is daily the production of so much real good.

Some few of those who are now in the house, were abandoned by the cruel hand of obdurate parents on the commission of the first offence, though drawn thereto by designing artifice, and under the most faithful promise of marriage. One, in particular, deserted in the hour of distress, by the father who begat her, her mother being dead. His obdurate heart would not again receive her to his home, though pressed thereto by a near kinsman. In this situation she had no alternative; she fled her native county; she came to town, in hopes some relation or other would receive her, and endeavour to fix her in servitude. Obdurate relations, obdurate friends; none would acknowledge her; none would succour, none would recommend her. In this situation what was to be done? She could not starve! She became too easy a prey to prostitution, whilst she happily was relieved by the open, the charitable benefactors of this asylum.

What would that relation have merited, whose liberality of mind, overlooking little delicacies, would have had the generosity to have rescued such a female from the oppression of an unnatural father! from prostitution! from the inevitable hand of destruction! had but his doors been open for her reception. What would that relation have deserved, who, by patronising this child of misfortune, had placed her in a reputable service, or perhaps got her reputably, if not elegantly, at least honourably, married. No doubt, in such a case, an amiable woman, with her mind as yet untainted with a continuance in vice, would have proved a good wife, a tender mother, and a worthy member of society.

I have, my dear Madam, I fear, dwelt much too long on this subject, and must therefore beg leave to draw this long epistle to a conclusion.

It remains only that I return you, my dear Madam, my most grateful thanks for every good your kind notice has introduced me to in this place, and for every good it may be productive of in my future life: and, with a heart replete with the utmost gratitude, I conclude myself, Madam,

Your most obedient

and grateful-humble servant,

M. S.

End of Dr. Dodd's Magdalen.



HISTORY OF FANNY MELMOUTH.

ABOUT thirty miles distant from the metropolis lived a gentleman, whose agreeable form and fair reputation rendered him the object of desire with every father that had a marriageable daughter, and of every daughter who knew any thing of the true value of happiness. But though Mr. Melmouth was too well bred not to treat the ladies with proper distinction, his heart remained his own for many years; and, as the little ridicule of disappointed vanity told the story, reserved itself for a supernatural conquest.

The point was at length, however, cleared up to his honour; for on the appearance of Miss Forrester, the orphan daughter of a deceased clergyman, he confessed himself subdued, and sighed in lover-like strains for the nymph of his wishes.

Miss Forrester was unable to resist the conviction that there was a congeniality of soul between them; but as her fortune was small, and his expectancies limited, prudence whispered her, the wisest step she could pursue was a well-timed retreat. The idea was judicious; the conduct would have been heroic: but then she owed too many civilities to her friends to fly them abruptly: and a lover, apprised of an approaching separation, naturally exerts his best ingenuity to retard it to the last possible moment.

Because it was right Miss Forrester and Mr. Melmouth should never meet again, they had such repeated meetings, and bade one another so many tender and everlasting adieus, that they ended in a resolution never to part so long as they lived.

Having got thus far in romance, they were for a time so taken up with the thoughts of living with each other, that they never once remembered it would be necessary for them to have a means of subsistence; and when the unwelcome consideration did at last obtrude itself, it was settled between them as a capital stroke
of

of wisdom, that they should marry, but keep their marriage secret, until Mr Melmuth should obtain that preferment a Right Honourable school-fellow had promised to procure for him, if he would devote himself to the church.

They married: and never pair loved, or were happier than they. Secure from all danger or possibility of being sundered by the stern frowns or seducing smiles of fortune, all was fairy ground they trod together, and all their days were truly halcyon ones.

The young nobleman was not wanting on his part to remember his engagement. He got Mr. Melmouth a genteel curacy, with the prospect of a fat vicarage on the daily-expected dropping-off of the then incumbent (who was pronounced by his physicians in the last stage of a dropsy) and they, for the first time, felt the pangs of separation. But what is separation where pen and ink are not prohibited? What they were unable to speak, they wrote to each other; and, to the honour of Hymen, saw three revolutions of the anniversary of their union, without one wish or one thought that did not center in their mutual happiness. But there was a rub in store for them, which, as they could not foresee, it was impossible they should guard against.

A general election producing a strong opposition for a neighbouring borough, Lord Franklin, Mr. Melmouth's patron, who took an active interest in favour of one of the candidates, resolved to compliment him with his personal support. He accordingly attended him down, and entering into all the spirit of those public undertakings, proposed they should give a ball, by way of genteel bribe to the Ladies.

The preparations were magnificent, the invitations universal; and on the appointed day, Mrs. Melmouth, who appeared in all her native charms, and under her maiden character, soon caught his Lordship's eye. He contrived to sit next her, and found her conversation as pleasing as her person was lovely. He had a generous way of thinking; and having informed himself that she was a gentlewoman by birth as well as education, rejoiced

rejoiced in having the power to lift her to the eminence she merited. Nor was it long before he sought an opportunity of telling her as much; and she with heart-felt anguish communicated the affair to her husband.

Distressed beyond measure at this intelligence, Mr. Melmouthe conjured her not to let their secret escape her; assured her she was in safe and honourable hands; but that love was a passion to be dreaded, when lighted up in the heart of a man who had it in his power to be an enemy, if from any unlucky chance he ceased to be a friend.

The more my Lord beheld and conversed with her, the more strongly he was attached. "Her look was meaning, and her motion sense." Nor could he figure to his imagination a higher felicity, than spending his life and fortune in protecting and rewarding so much excellence.

Mrs. Melmouthe, sensible of the injustice of countenancing this growing inclination, as, instead of my Lord's returning to London as soon as the poll closed, which was the declared expectation of his friends, he had settled his abode in an adjoining village, she determined, without further disturbance to her husband's mind, to find a moment of revealing her marriage, and trusting to his Lordship's generosity for the rest. Many sleepless nights did she pass in preparing an address, not one syllable of which (as is generally the case) she had occasion to say; for, with all our prudence, chance often does more for us than the best exertion of our best abilities can effect.

The afternoon at length arrived, big with the fate, as she considered it, of her beloved Melmouthe; for all her apprehensions were on his account, and she vainly strove to suppress her agitations.

My Lord appeared in the greatest flow of spirits imaginable. For as all his solicitations had been unable, till that period, to obtain him the indulgence of a private interview, he drew the most flattering conclusions from her unhop'd-for condescension. He perceived the

she was much confused; but, believing it to be only the beautiful confusion of virgin modesty, trusted it would by degrees subside into confidence in his honour and his love. He therefore said many of the most encouraging and generous things.

Mrs. Melmouth endeavoured to speak, but the power, of articulation was for some time denied her. At length, disengaging the hand his Lordship had, in a no less graceful than respectful manner, lifted to his lips, by an involuntary impulse, she sunk at his feet, and besought him to hear her. Never was astonishment greater than Lord Franklin's at this extraordinary action. He, however, conjured her to compose herself, and rest assured, that if he had the power of promoting her happiness, or rewarding the virtues of her character, she might command him, though at the expence of his life.

"Ah, my Lord," said the kneeling Mrs. Melmouth (for all his efforts could not remove her from that posture) "how blessedly do you fulfil my confidence in your goodness! But, thank Heaven, I have no favours to solicit, no wishes to advance, that can in the smallest degree affect, much less endanger your safety. I have only your compassion to implore, your displeasure to deprecate, and to confess to you that I am——"

"Speak," cried his Lordship, "instantly speak. What, what can you be, but the most amiable of women!"

"In the moment," replied Mrs. Melmouth, "that I have suffered Lord Franklin to believe me gratefully sensible of the distinction, the unmerited distinction he has paid me, I am the wife of another."

"Rise, Madam," said my Lord; "you have relieved me from a thousand tortures. I would not know my choice dishonoured, or have my judgment so grossly impeached, as to dote upon a vicious character. That you are married, is indeed my misfortune; and you may have reason for keeping your marriage secret. That you are the wife of

H

"another"

" another is no fault, though you have rendered me
 " miserable by the intelligence. Yet it is mean, it is
 " poor, to remember myself at such a juncture.
 " Your sensibility proves you deserve my friendship ;
 " and though I must perhaps never see you more, let me
 " have the felicity, Madam, of knowing how I can
 " serve you. "

" What an honour to human nature is such a cha-
 " racter as your Lordship's ! I have heard strange
 " stories of the resentment of disappointed love, but
 " you have inspired me with hopes which gladden
 " my heart, and having graciously forgiven me, you
 " will also pardon my husband. "

" Indulge my weakness so far, Madam, on this oc-
 " casion, as to call that happy man by his name, and
 " believe me incapable of doing him the smallest pre-
 " judice. That he loved you, can never appear a mi-
 " racle to me ; but that he could consent to let so
 " honourable a union be kept secret, is, I own, what
 " I am unable to comprehend. "

" Alas ! my Lord, perhaps the strongest springs of
 " human actions are poverty and love. He is one of
 " the best, the most valuable of men. "

" Dear Madam, once more I beseech you to spare
 " me. Fortune has then, I perceive, been as cruel to
 " you as nature has been bountiful. Tell me, how-
 " ever, but his name ; and if he has sufficient liberal-
 " mindedness to accept the friendship of a man who
 " must envy, though he could never injure him, you
 " shall have no reason in future to practise disguises. "
 " Melmouth. "

" Melmouth ! Madam. "

" Yes, my Lord, that Melmouth who has already
 " so largely tasted of your bounty. Accident brought
 " us acquainted, and an imprudent attachment (for
 " where fortune is denied, matrimonial attachments
 " must ever be imprudent) was the consequence.
 " But though I had the courage to marry him, I was
 " too fearful of wounding his interest, not to beseech
 " him

" him to wait for better days before we called the world
 " to sit in judgment on our conduct. The moment
 " your Lordship distinguished me by your favourable
 " opinion, I informed him of our misfortune, and we
 " have continued ever since to lament that, where we
 " wished to approve ourselves more particularly grate-
 " ful, we should be compelled either to risque the fu-
 " ture prospects of our advancement, according to
 " our poor apprehensions, or practise deception. The
 " woman's fears, my Lord, prevailed, and the hope
 " that some other pursuit——"

" You are now running into the greatest errors.
 " Can your modesty render you so insensible to your
 " own charms ? I will, however, have ample revenge :
 " and your Melmouth, Madam, your happy Mel-
 " mouth, shall feel the utmost weight of my benevo-
 " lence." So saying, he hastily retired."

The third day after this trying interview, having
 written a faithful account to her husband of all that
 had passed, Mrs. Melmouth, when taking a solitary
 walk in the garden, was surprized by the noisy rattling
 of a chaise and four. Her heart felt she knew not what
 of pleasing presension. Nor did it deceive her ; for in a
 few moments she found herself in her beloved Mel-
 mouth's arms ; who had rode post, at his Lordship's
 request, to inform her of the appointment he had
 obtained for him to a plentiful living in Hampshire,
 together with a scarf as his chaplain ; a hint, he smil-
 ing observed, on presenting it, that pluralities were in
 store for him. It was now hard to decide which was
 most in love with this generous patron, the husband or
 the wife.

Never were people more beloved or esteemed than
 Mr. and Mrs. Melmouth : he was the friend, the
 father of his parishioners ; she their physician and
 kind benefactress. A little family succeeded, and they
 seemed not to have one desire or one wish ungra-
 tified ; but when human felicity is at the summit,
 we should do well to prepare ourselves for a change.
 Mrs. Melmouth, in one of her charitable visitations,

caught a severe cold, which brought on a fever; and in nine melancholy days, by depriving her of life, rendered her husband the most wretched of men.

Lord Franklin, having been absent near thirteen years, had just at this period wrote them that it was his intention of becoming their neighbour; a circumstance which added not a little to their delight; for they had not only hopes of benefitting their children through his interest, but congratulated themselves on the recovered peace of one of the worthiest minds on earth. The news of this terrible event was the return he received to his lively and friendly epistle, and he again fixed himself a voluntary exile from a country that now more than ever was become irksome to his imagination.

Mr. Melmouth's eldest child, a lovely girl, was now just turned of twelve years old; his other children were infants: he could not, nevertheless, bear the idea of her being controuled by any one; but, from a mistaken, a cruel fondness, lifted her into premature womanhood, and suffered her to preside over his household.

Miss Melmouth, together with great sprightliness, had an uncommon share of understanding. Her mother, who was well qualified for the task, had diligently instructed her in the rudiments of those polite accomplishments music and drawing, both of which she carefully prosecuted. She sung, she played agreeably; and had so happy a fancy, that she was early taken notice of for her elegant drawings. Mr. Melmouth was much rejoiced that his daughter was capable of filling up her time so pleasingly without company; for company, from recalling scenes to his memory that were lost to him for ever, was beyond measure afflicting to him; but the great misfortune was, that she fell into a taste for reading, and being left so entirely to herself, neither assisted her judgment, nor improved her morals, by her literary studies. Novels, the most senseless and exceptionable of their kind, became her favourite amusement; and by those false
and

and ridiculous pictures of life and human nature, were all her opinions regulated, all her maxims drawn.

In this romantic retirement did Miss Melmouth pass her days till she attained her eighteenth year, when she began to think it an unspeakable hardship to remain in obscurity, so well fitted, as her vanity whispered she was, for shining in an active sphere of life. Her imagination had scarcely caught this idea, than she became impatient to deliver herself from paternal restraints, the only obstacle to all her wishes. An unhopèd-for incident effected what the labour of years might not have accomplished. A lady, a parishioner, and particular friend of her father's, having been for some time in a declining state of health, was at last prevailed upon to call in the judgment of a London physician, who pronounced the Bristol waters the only cure for her complaint; and, at this lady's earnest request, it was settled that Miss Melmouth should make her first excursion from the spot of her nativity under her protection.

Her father's consent to this bewitchingly-agreeable journey was no sooner obtained, than her heart beat high with pleasing expectation. She should now prove, she said, the power of the little charms that God and nature had bestowed upon her, nor longer, like the rose in the desert, "bloom unseen."

So young and so beautiful a creature could only appear to command admiration. The old, the infirm, the self-adoring coxcombs confessed her fairest of the fair, and forgot their cares when she deigned to converse with them.

Among the number of those that bowed the knee to this earthly divinity, was a bold, enterprizing spark, in whose breast, however artfully disguised, love was a mere animal passion. The object of his attachment, or rather pursuit, was considered as a toy, to be enjoyed and cast away at pleasure. Tenderness, generosity, friendship, and truth, were sentiments he privately despised, though he publicly extolled them; and he only followed to ensnare, obtain, and to abandon.

Captain Newman had well informed himself whom he had to deal with in the person of Miss Melmouth; a raw, inexperienced girl, of humble expectancies and rustic education; he therefore intoxicated her with compliments; but carefully avoided, in the height of his raptures, to let a word of matrimony escape him. On the other hand, Miss Melmouth, who considered declarations of eternal attachment and a husband as synonymous terms, had not a doubt of the honourable intentions of her lover; and feeling a kind of awkward somewhat in touching a string he so dexterously contrived to pass over in all their conversations, was willing to trust to time for the relief of the only perplexity of her situation, and the restoring her to her father in the character befitting his child. She, however, with great *naïveté*, one afternoon, on her lover's calling her the mistress of his fate, and beseeching her with uncommon ardour to tell him when she meant to put a period to his languishments, replied, that he had taught her to have no will but his, consequently the determination had changed hands.

The Captain affected great transports on this declaration. "But, my angel," said he, "have you the courage to adopt the mode of union I would prescribe?" "My soul," continued he, "spurns the idea of the common forms of domesticating; frolic, resolution, enterprise, is my motto; and I believe no lady of spirit would decline the *éclat* of a Scotch journey with your humble slave, or despise the honours of a glorious elopement."

Miss Melmouth had all the dispositions to the lively and the fashionable he could have wished, but she had not totally subdued her filial considerations; she therefore replied, "My father, Sir, has his great singularities, and——"

"Well, my dearest," interrupted he, "but I can bring you chapter and verse, that you are to leave father and mother for your husband: nor, if you really love, will you hesitate a moment to regulate your conduct by your lover's principles."

"That

“ That I love, is a point my sincerity will not suffer me to contend ; but that I am a coward—”
 “ Away, away : you are a beautiful simpleton ; but we will laugh this timidity out of countenance ; and as it is the only blemish in your composition, you will consequently be rendered the most perfect of beings.”

Miss Melmouth felt it impossible to resist the Captain's eloquence ; her objections, therefore, became weaker and weaker, until she consented to take the actual step he desired. Her father, she reflected, had other daughters besides herself ; nay, three beloved sons to comfort him ; and as the news of her elopement would be so soon followed by the news of her marriage, all she persuaded herself would be well again. Dangerous, destructive logic ! As if the wounded heart could be healed at will, or the wounded reputation was capable of an instantaneous cure.

The sun, the succeeding morning, scarce began to dawn, before the lady was up, and equipped for her journey. A little bundle on her arm, and a solitary guinea in her pocket, fearless and regardless did she brave all the dangers of withdrawing herself from the protection of her friends, brave all the mortifications of the world's unfavourable opinion, and forego those prospects of advancement a handsome, well-born, and well-educated young woman may without vanity call her own.

The Captain, who was true to his appointment, received her with raptures ; the post-boy had his orders ; and away they drove, Jehu-like, for the land of matrimony.

Miss Melmouth's acquaintance with Captain Newman was not of more than two months standing. She had found him gay, complaisant, and assiduous ; but whether his temper was gentle or turbulent, his morals decent or corrupt, his finances good or bad, she had never once taken the trouble to enquire.

Timidity is the guard of youth ; prudence of age. A stranger, and that stranger a man, are, or at least ought

ought to be, sufficient incitements to modest reserve in a woman. His compliments should be cautiously attended to; his visits received under very particular restrictions: what then can be said for a young woman's throwing herself into the arms of, for aught she knows, a common destroyer, a cruel, a practised deceiver, an unprincipled tyrant? But be it here observed, that however natural, amiable, or safe these reflections and apprehensions, your romance-readers make a point of subduing them all. The hero is ever a man of honour, and the heroine a spirited demoiselle. All forms are violated, every law of delicacy spurned: nature and self-esteem are trampled under foot, the whole soul is warped, and the most censurable propensities are embraced. The punishment is, however, adequate to the crime: the lover becomes the scourge of the fair abandoned, he is the first to judge her with severity, to insult, to forsake her; and, regardless of her prayers, her tears, and equally regardless of his own vows, leaves her to the bitterness of her own feelings, the world's scarasins, and the world's necessities. Want and infamy stare her in the face, harpies of every kind surround her, remorse and wretchedness pursue her. But we fly the heart-rending prospect, and return to our history.

Captain Newman had proceeded only one day's journey with his fair mistress, before he began to be very warm in his attentions, and free in his language. Miss Melmouth was a little startled.

"I thought, Sir," said she, "that your politeness would have been much rather augmented than diminished by the compliment I have paid you. That I am now in your power is an act of free will; but the abuse of that power would instantly shake the principle from which it is derived. I believe you incapable of every base and dishonourable action, and I trust it will be your care, as it really is your interest, to preserve my good opinion."

The devil affected to be abashed; but he only temporised, and clapped his cloven foot for the present behind

behind him. The prospects of the country, and the pleasures of a town-life, furnished them with abundant conversation, until they arrived safely in the city of Edinburgh.

Miss Melmouth imagined her lover would have been impatient to tie the indissoluble knot: but she found herself quite mistaken. Though they reached the destined spot so early as eleven o'clock in the morning, not a word of matrimony fell from the Captain's lips the whole day. He was, nevertheless, the same kind friend and ardent adorer he had ever professed himself. Being willing to hope, even against all probability, the infatuated girl persuaded herself that his silence was a stroke of superabundant refinement, until every thing should be settled for the introduction of the priest.

An elegant supper was bespoke, and every appearance of felicity preserved; but still the grand essential, the end of their journey, seemed to be totally forgotten by the gentleman; and, strange to tell, the lady, who had fled for the declared, the acknowledged purpose of becoming a bride, and had no other fence, but the performance of the marriage ceremony, between her and the loss of friends, reputation, and whatever is most dear and valuable on earth, could not bring herself to ask why that only security of her future life was delayed.

Supper was served up, and who so agreeable, so charming as the Captain! He then only began to live, he trod air, he touched the skies! All which seraphic nonsense was acceptable, because believed by Miss Melmouth to be the natural overflowings of a fond heart. But when the cloth was removed, the scene became somewhat changed.

"Thus far, my dear Miss Melmouth," said Mr. Newman, "have I proceeded to convince you that it
 "is my wish to wear your chains to the end of my existence. I fancied myself an enemy to shackles,
 "but I now find myself mistaken; I glory in them;
 "and, instead of a sacrifice, I now consider my liberty
 "as

“ as an offering you have a right to command, or, more properly, an incense due to your divinity.”

Miss Melmouth smiled; but not finding the ready reply, he resumed, in the same gay accent, “ but you, my fair, my queen, what have *you* done to prove your affection? Consented to make a little excursion with the man you confess is honoured with a first place in your esteem. And what has been your behaviour during that excursion? That of coldness and suspicion. Indeed, my sweet trisler, for fear of wounding your nicety, I have suffered myself to be kept at bay, in a manner that has so mortally hurt my pride, that you must, you must make me a compensation.”

“ How, Sir! said Miss Melmouth, can you condemn me for chiding, when you presumed to advance beyond all bounds?”

“ Ah, my lovely casuist, what distinctions are these? You must be uniform, or you can be nothing. Why so religiously observe your maidenly rules, after launching on the ocean of confidence, and bravely breaking through the strong ties of filial duty, with a little million of *et ceteras*, which I am too generous to mention? But you must not look so grave: those features were formed for the smiles and graces to revel in. All I mean is, that having proved to you I am no ravisher, having brought you to a situation of safety and freedom, you must show me whether your faith in me is firmly fixed, or whether you conceive me a man that must be *harnessed* into honour.”

“ I really, Sir,” said Miss Melmouth, “ am at a loss to understand you. I should surely have given you a poor opinion of your future wife, if I had failed to remember what is due to myself.”

“ By heaven, you are fighting against yourself; cutting down my best resolves in your favour with your own weapons. For, Madam, can you suppose, when a fit of reflection may seize me, that the runaway will be sanctified by the prude? No,

“ no,

“no, it was ill-timed reserve, and saucy apprehension: nay, in fact, it was a challenge, which any man but myself would have accepted. But I scorn to avail myself of lapses. The consent of the heart, and the conviction of the head, is what I aspire to, and you shall have your alternative. This night, my sweet, capricious one, this very night we will either part for ever, or you shall render it the happiest of my life.”

A thunder-clap would have been a gentle whisper to this declaration. Her ear, her pride, her soul was beyond measure alarmed. “Oh, Sir,” said she, “do not punish me for a fault which your own intreaties have brought me to commit! With you, at least, I ought to stand acquitted; with you!——” Then, bursting into tears, she anxiously awaited his reply, as that was to convey to her the voice of her destiny.

“I admire you, my dear Madam; I admire the finesse you are mistress of. Sighs, tears, and sobs are the arts of the sex, of willful woman labouring for her purpose; but a little unfortunately they are ill applied. The pathetic, to strike our sensibility, must have meaning. You are in possession of all your virgin honours. I am no Russian, Miss Melmouth; I sue and supplicate, not seize or compel. Your steps shall be unconstrained, your person free. If you refuse to gratify me in a point which I have resolved shall be decisive, I restore you to that world you have so often talked of renouncing for my sake; and like a man of honour will bear my faithful testimony that, whatever success I might have in winning your *mind*, I never could obtain an indulgence; no, not even the innocent indulgence which custom and love authorise, where your *person* was concerned. I see I have discomposed you; I am sorry for the effect; though I can and will justify the cause. But if you please we will end here. To-morrow morning, to-night, if you command me, I will remove myself from your presence; and although my life should be the for-

“feit, never, no never behold that dangerous, that bewitching face again.”

“Heaven and earth!” exclaimed Miss Melmouth; “what will become of me? Cruel, cruel Mr. Newman, to allure me from happiness, from my father, from my friends! But go: leave me to the censures of a merciless world. I detest your baseness: you have shut my heart for ever against you: I will avoid you as I would my evil genius; your insolent barbarity has cured me.”

“Inestimable, irresistible creature! I fear I have gone too far. Oh let me wipe away those precious tears for ever from your eyes. Condescend to make me yours, on your own, on any terms. Do but forgive this trial of your principles, and I shall again be happy. I had been taught to suppose that love could break down every barrier of virtue; but I exult in my error, and am, if possible, a thousand times more in love with you than ever.”

A very tender dialogue ensued, in which mutual vows of everlasting constancy were reciprocally made, and they sat down to their little desert with the utmost pleasure and satisfaction.

Miss Melmouth begged to be indulged with water, but her lover insisted upon dashing it with wine. The evening was warm, the beverage champaign. Numberless healths were proposed by the Captain. Their eternal attachment: their endless felicity; their fathers, brothers, sisters, friends; till at last poor Miss Melmouth became insensibly elevated, her head giddy, her complexion inflamed. In a word, by address on the one side, and unhappy error on the other, she fell an easy victim to a deceiver, whom she had, but a few hours before, determined, on a discovery of his unworthy desires, to tear herself from for ever.

The morning arrived, and the wretched creature felt the whole weight of her misery. Indiscretion had thrown her into the mouth of danger, an unwomanly vice had destroyed her. Intoxicated with wine! Mr. Melmouth's daughter, so universally celebrated for temperance

temperance and moderation, intoxicated with wine! The idea was sufficient to cover her with confusion, and cast her on the mercy of the man who had been the witness of her excesses, to save her from the reproaches, the condemnation she merited.

The Captain congratulated himself on this un-hoped-for victory. The firmness with which she had resolved to fly him, had convinced him that no other method could be successful; and he graciously condescended to sooth her into self-forgiveness, and self-complacency, because she appeared more pleasing in his eyes when dressed in smiles, than when drowned in tears, or overwhelmed with lamentations.

Matrimony was now a subject no more talked of, and it was even forgot. They removed themselves, however, from their public situation, and were for a time so enraptured with their retirement and each other, that they lost every trace of the past, enjoyed every satisfaction of the present, and banished every painful idea of the future. But these blessed eternities have their terminations. The Captain became every day more and more sensible to objects without; and at length, in order to vary the scene, introduced a male friend or two, who complimented him highly on his choice of a fair-one, and professed warmly to envy his felicity.

A few lonely evenings then began, for the first time, to be experienced by this unhappy girl; for truly unhappy did she feel herself when fatally disenchanting. Reading, her once-favourite amusement, had no longer charms for her; for her favourite authors ever exhibited pictures of undying truth, and unfading joy. The hero, through every distressful incident, was always constant; the heroine, however tempted or attacked, was always chaste. The comparison was mortifying, the contrast too great. She read no more. Flattery had also lost its charm. The effusions of her lover in the soft moments of dalliance, served only to raise emotions of self-resentment and of self-reproach. When he called her his angel, with a sigh she would reply,

I

"Alas!

“ Alas ! how fallen a ~~tone~~ !” Music afforded her as little pleasure as books. Every soft sonnet celebrated faithful Corydons and vestal Sylvias. Drawing was vainly called in aid. The beauties of nature no longer delighted her eye. Prospects, animals, trees, flowers, had nothing in them now to excite admiration or delight. And when, to beguile the melancholy hour, she strove to imitate them, her once-ready pencil would lose its wonted correctness, and objects ill-formed, designs ill-executed and disgusting, were sure to be the consequence ; and no sooner were they drawn but they were torn in pieces. They were comparatively like her mind, deformed and disgraceful, and therefore only fit to be condemned and destroyed.

But this condition, however irksome or ineligible, was paradise to what she was about to prove. The Captain’s finances began to run low : his family despised him too much to strip themselves for his accommodation. His friends were all of them as extravagant and profligate as himself, and he had not abilities for gambling. Many were the debts he had contracted since his connection with Miss Melmouth, not one of which he knew how to discharge ; and happening to meet with a rich widow, who, it was apparent, beheld him in no very unfavourable light, he persuaded himself it was equally moral and politic to make her purse pay for all.

But then there was but one way of becoming master of it. Well, and was not that a very easy one ? His kind stars had saved him from that last of the evils, being shackled, though he had once feared no other price could have bought Miss Melmouth’s person, and he had a right to prosecute his interest whatever way it led.

This sophistry did not however reach his heart ; that was much too callous to stand in need of any deceptions or disguises ; he only argued the point with himself by way of exercising his talents, not with the least view or desire to convince his reason, much less palliate his conduct. He therefore visited, flattered, and won the lady, fearless and regardless of every consequence ;

sequence ; and the poor, neglected, undone Miss Melmouth, was the only one of all his acquaintance unapprised of his marriage.

His debts were suddenly paid ; and on a visit or two which he condescended to honour Miss Melmouth with, she perceived his purse was replenished ; and ignorant as she was of his fortune, she rejoiced in the idea that he had received remittances, and would be happier in himself and kinder to her than she had found him for some time ; generously imputing all his cruel absences to that account, and flattering herself that, as the cause was removed, the effect would cease. An agreeable evening was, however, succeeded by a whole week's total non-appearance of the Captain ; at the expiration of which one of his gay friends presented himself, and abruptly told her, he was married, and had left her for ever.

No language can paint the agonies she was thrown into. Tears, fits, and the bitterest exclamations succeeded each other. The gentleman was one of those who fancy they know the sex. He looked upon all this natural distress as artifice and deceit ; and therefore humbly intreated her to transfer her affections to a more deserving object ; modestly insinuating himself to be the man. But she was deaf to his eloquence, and the grave alone was to hide her from the world and herself.

The gentleman, notwithstanding all these discouragements, ventured to repeat his visits. He found her ill, and in actual want of charitable supplies ; for, on the nurse's asking for money, with streaming eyes she confessed she had not one shilling left ; the consequence of which was, that the gentleman was generous, and the lady, on the recovery of her health and spirits, grateful. Thus one departure from the line of propriety evermore leads to a second, and the enormity of our conduct fails to strike, because it is softened by progression.

Miss Melmouth's prosperity was a second time of short continuance. The regiment her new gallant belonged

longed to was ordered abroad, and her tears began again to flow; but as he had the humanity to put her in possession of a very comfortable sum of money, she determined to go immediately to London, and endeavour to stop at the point she had attained.

To London she came; and the rather melancholy cast of mind this separation had produced, inclined her to enquire at a proper distance how her father had borne her elopement. That unhappy man, she learned, was lodged in a private mad-house, without the smallest hope of recovering his reason; and in his outrageous fits would incessantly call on his wife and daughter's name, till quite exhausted, he ever relapsed into a stupor, from which it was difficult to rouse him. Her brothers and sisters were scattered abroad on the face of the earth, among the friends her father's blameless life had gained him, and his poor little effects so disposed of for their benefit, as seemed best to the wisdom of their several protectors.

This dreadful news struck forcibly on Miss Melmouth's mind, and in an agony of unfeigned contrition she resolved to forsake the evil of her ways, and live as she knew her father would have wished, had his reason been continued to him. Five whole days did she persevere in these gloomy and pious resolutions: but fancying at last that she herself would also become insane, if she adhered longer to them, she turned her thoughts to dissipation for relief.

Her first sally was to the theatre, where she soon made an acquaintance: another and another succeeded; until disease, that concomitant of vice, marked her for punishment, and she was compelled to undergo all the miseries of a public cure, and public exposure of her infamy. On regaining her liberty, she was beyond measure distressed how to dispose of herself; languor had taken place of the fine lustre that once sparkled in her eyes: even the lowest wretches spurned her; and the better ranks shunned her from supposing the connection unsafe. Thus from necessity compelled into privacy, she was reduced to her last shilling, and
had

had not a resource on earth, when happily the recollection of the Magdalen-House occurred to her, and she crawled to offer herself as a proper object of its protection.

Here she was treated with tenderness, and accommodated with every necessary. Here she learned by mere accident that her father was dead; and for the first time since her fallen condition tasted heart-felt felicity.

A lady, one of the patronesses of the house, observed her very decent deportment, and desired she might meet with encouragement. She was ordered to learn a few hymns, which having done, every one was astonished at her voice and execution. That she was a person of education soon got air; and her features, from composure and regular living, in some degree resumed their wonted loveliness.

The time being elapsed for her continuance in the house, the elderly lady, who had distinguished her by her favour, professed herself ready to receive her into hers. She accordingly emerged from her obscurity, and entered with very promising prospects on her new condition.

The lady discovered she read and wrote well, played, sung, painted, &c. and therefore constituted her a kind of supernumerary in her family to overlook every thing, and do little or nothing else.

Scarce six months had passed over her head in this peaceful, this reputable manner, before a little bustle commenced. The Lady's nephew, who had been abroad near nineteen years, was inclined to revisit England, and every thing was to be set in order for his reception.

He arrived, and soon bestowed some polite attention on this pretty Magdalen; and this attention coming from a man of fashion, in spite of herself, revived all the long-extinguished vanity and levity of her character; nor did she fail to play off every allurement to win his attachment.

One morning that she had officiously entered his study, he bade her sit down, and hear what he wished to say to her with serious attention.

"When I first beheld your face," said he, "I felt emotions I am unable to describe; for though it has neither the lovely vivacity, nor beautiful complexion, of its likeness, the features and the turn of countenance are the same. A fatal incident prevented my obtaining that woman of my choice, and the sad history I have received of you forbids me indulging one thought where you are concerned. I am no fanatic, though no libertine. I ever considered the seduction of innocence as unmanly and barbarous, and a connection, except a temporary one, with the seduced, as a reproach to the understanding. Tell me then, oh, tell me, how heaven in its wrath permitted you to debase its noblest work, and when it had given you a form so lovely, denied you the purity of sentiment which distinguished the object of my attachment."

Miss Melmouth was so confounded by the peculiarity of this address, that she knew not how to reply.

"Be explicit," said his Lordship, "nor suffer a false shame to deprive you of a real friend. By the accomplishments you possess, you must have fallen from an eminence. I am so far well read in the female heart, that I can perceive you might again be won. But I have discovered my real character to you. My disappointments have steeled my breast against female blandishments; and you have nothing to hope for from me but a saviour, if you are not resolved to abandon yourself. Your situation in this house is a precarious one. I know my aunt's temper; one displeasing act would obliterate the remembrance of whole years of acceptable services, and she would think it more meritorious to punish than she ever did to reward; therefore, my good, unhappy girl, be explicit. I cannot behold you without compassion, and it shall be your own indiscretion if I am not rendered serviceable."

Miss

Miss Melmouth was tempted in the first instance to have passed herself off for a creature more sinned against than sinning; but there was a somewhat in his Lordship's countenance that told her he was not to be imposed upon; she therefore very openly communicated her true history, only concealing names for the sake of her brothers and sisters, and her father's memory.

"There is an air of truth and ingenuity in what you have related," replied his Lordship; "but I must have confirmation before I can carry my designs into execution. I repeat, it is but too apparent, notwithstanding all your past sufferings, that you might again be attached, and again forsaken. Thus vice ever leaves the mind open to any vicious overtures, and, however new set for a time, in consequence of mortification, necessity, or other incidental grievances, recurs to its vitiated state, and unweaves the web of every pious resolution. Oh, Mrs. Melmouth! Mrs. Melmouth! had the resemblance between this young woman and you held good in mind as well as person, I might yet have been tolerably happy."

"What have you said, my Lord! what name have you pronounced? Alas!" (falling at his feet) "behold in me the eldest child of that worthy mother; a child that has murdered the husband of her tenderest affections; a parricide, a strumpet, an abandoned wretch!"

"Rise," said my lord? "and endeavour to compose yourself. Oh, how does this discovery tear open the wounds of my heart! That most aimable woman, I have long since heard, is no more. On her account I quitted, and on her account prolonged my absence from a country which, on her death, had no charms for me. I am now returned; good heavens! for what? To see her contaminated child, the child of her chaste—but I will not reproach; I see you are affected: be pacified; be comforted; there is a wonderful chain in human events. Your orphan brothers and sisters shall be my care, the children of my adoption; and,

“ unless you suffer vice again to take hold of you,
“ you shall never experience another distress. And
“ now, Fanny, leave me ; leave me to my recollection,
“ and revolve in your mind what situation (I mean a
“ private one) will be most agreeable to you ; but bid
“ a final farewell to mankind. You never can form
“ an honourable connection, and I will not be accessa-
“ ry to your bringing pollution to any man’s arms.
“ A life of contrition, of retirement, can alone be a
“ life of happiness to one circumstanced as you are.
“ Let this conviction sink deep in your mind ; for
“ your future days must be regulated by its dictates.
“ Had you been virtuous, affluence, splendor, title,
“ had awaited you ; but you have carved your own
“ destiny, and your best merit now will be humble
“ and contented submission.”

His Lordship’s prediction was right : her situation was precarious. An officious servant had overheard a part of the conversation that had passed between him and Miss Melmouth, and directly carried it to his lady. Her fears for her nephew determined her to get rid of so dangerous a person before it was too late ; as she judged, from the imperfect account she had heard, that some improper connection was forming between them. She was therefore dismissed ; but a pretended, not the real cause, was assigned for that dismissal ; and she looked up to his Lordship for his promised protection. He did not deceive her, but settled a small but competent annuity upon her, and sent her into Berkshire, to a farm of one of his tenants, the occupier of which, an honest industrious man, maintained himself and family (a wife and three children) with credit and reputation. Here she enjoyed, in a peaceful retirement, that happy tranquillity that the bustle of the world had never afforded, and which she had been an utter stranger to from the moment of her defection from virtue.

CLEORA.

WRETCHED indeed is the state of those who possess great abilities, whose examples might do honour to the cause of religion, but whose dispositions are so much depraved, that they prefer the ways of vice to the delightful paths of virtue. The one leads to misery and to ruin; the other to felicity in this world, and in that which is to come. Experience daily shews that this reflection, however dreadful, is, alas! too true: it is no uncommon thing to see ingenuity allied with infamy, and an excellent education tending to subvert the noblest precepts of morality.

Cleora was descended from an ancient and honourable family. Nature had endowed her with an uncommon understanding, and no expence was spared in forming her for society. She was a perfect mistress of every polite accomplishment; and her manners were such, that she seemed formed to shine in the circles of nobility; yet, notwithstanding her natural good sense, notwithstanding her excellent education, her mind was deformed by vice. She fell a victim to her irregular passions; and those talents which should have made her an ornament, rendered her a pest of society. Impatience under restraint was the first step that led her to depravity. She eloped from a boarding-school with a man whom she never loved, and was to him united in the most sacred ties, for no other reason than to be freed from the irksomeness of confinement. A connection like this, when not founded on that firm basis mutual esteem, is seldom lasting. United as she was to a man whom she thought her inferior, and whom, in a short time, she both despised and detested; who met her indifference with neglect, and shewed but little concern for her fruitless and unavailing complaints; the impropriety of her conduct now stared her in the face; she repented of her folly when it was too late to remedy it; her disquietude soon became visible to the world, and she

she imprudently took no care to conceal it, but on every occasion was sure to exclaim against her husband. This behaviour rendered her remarkable, and gathered about her a number of those disgraces to human nature who call themselves men of gallantry, whose greatest boast is the number of families whose peace they have destroyed, and the number of parents whose hearts they have broken. She was pleased with their attentions, and they in time became her constant companions. At length a youth of fortune, pleased with her person, and hearing of her situation, prevailed on her to leave her husband. His desires were soon satiated, he became tired with the incumbrance, and in a short time left her to infamy and ruin. It is needless to dwell any longer on this melancholy part of her life; suffice it to say, that as her situation became more desperate, so her mind became more and more depraved, till, lost to every social virtue, she wandered neglected and abandoned in the horrid paths of common prostitution. Thus fell a woman who would have done honour to any station of life, but whose mind was so much depraved, that her extraordinary talents proved rather a curse than a blessing. Had she been guided by reason, what a blessing she would have been to society! Had she but been virtuous, how happy would have been the man who possessed so invaluable a treasure! But, on the contrary, as she proved vicious, she was a disgrace to society, and a thorn in the side of the man who was so truly unfortunate as to be her husband.



THE DYING PROSTITUTE,

AN ELEGY.

WEEP o'er the mis'ries of a wretched maid,
Who sacrific'd to man her health and fame;
Whose love, and truth, and trust were all repaid
By want and woe, disease and endless shame.

Curse not the poor lost wretch, who ev'ry ill
That proud unfeeling man can heap, sustains;
Sure she enough is curst, o'er whom his will,
Inflam'd by brutal passion, boundless reigns.

Spurn not my fainting body from your door,
Here let me rest my weary weeping head;
No greater mercy would my wants implore,
My sorrows soon shall lay me with the dead.

Who now beholds, but loaths my faded face,
So wan and fallow, chang'd with sin and care?
Or who can any former beauty trace
In eyes so sunk with famine and despair?

That I was virtuous once, and beauteous too,
And free from envious tongues my spotless fame;
These but torment, these but my tears renew,
These aggravate my present guilt and shame.

Expell'd by all, enforc'd by pining want,
I've wept and wander'd many a midnight hour;
Implor'd a pittance Lust would seldom grant,
Or sought a shelter from the driving show'r,

Oft as I rov'd, while beat the wint'ry storm,
Unknowing what to seek, or where to stray,
To gain relief, entic'd each hideous form
Each hideous form contemptuous turn'd away:

Where

Where were my virgin honours, virgin charms?
Oh! whither fled the pride I once maintain'd?
Or where the youths that woo'd me to their arms?
Or where the triumphs which my beauty gain'd?

Ah! say, insidious Damon! Monster! where?
What glory hast thou gain'd by my defeat?
Art thou more happy for that I'm less fair?
Or bloom thy laurels o'er my winding sheet?

The End.



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